HISTORY

OF

SEYD SAID,

SULTAN OF MUSCAT;

TOGETHER WITH AN

Account of the Countries and People

ON THE

SHORES OF THE PERSIAN GULF,

PARTICULARLY OF THE

WAHABEES.

BY

SHAIK MANSUR,

A NATIVE OF ROME,

Who after having practised as a Physician in many Parts of the East, became Commander of the Forces of the Sultan of Mascat, against the Geovasseom and Wahabees Pirates.

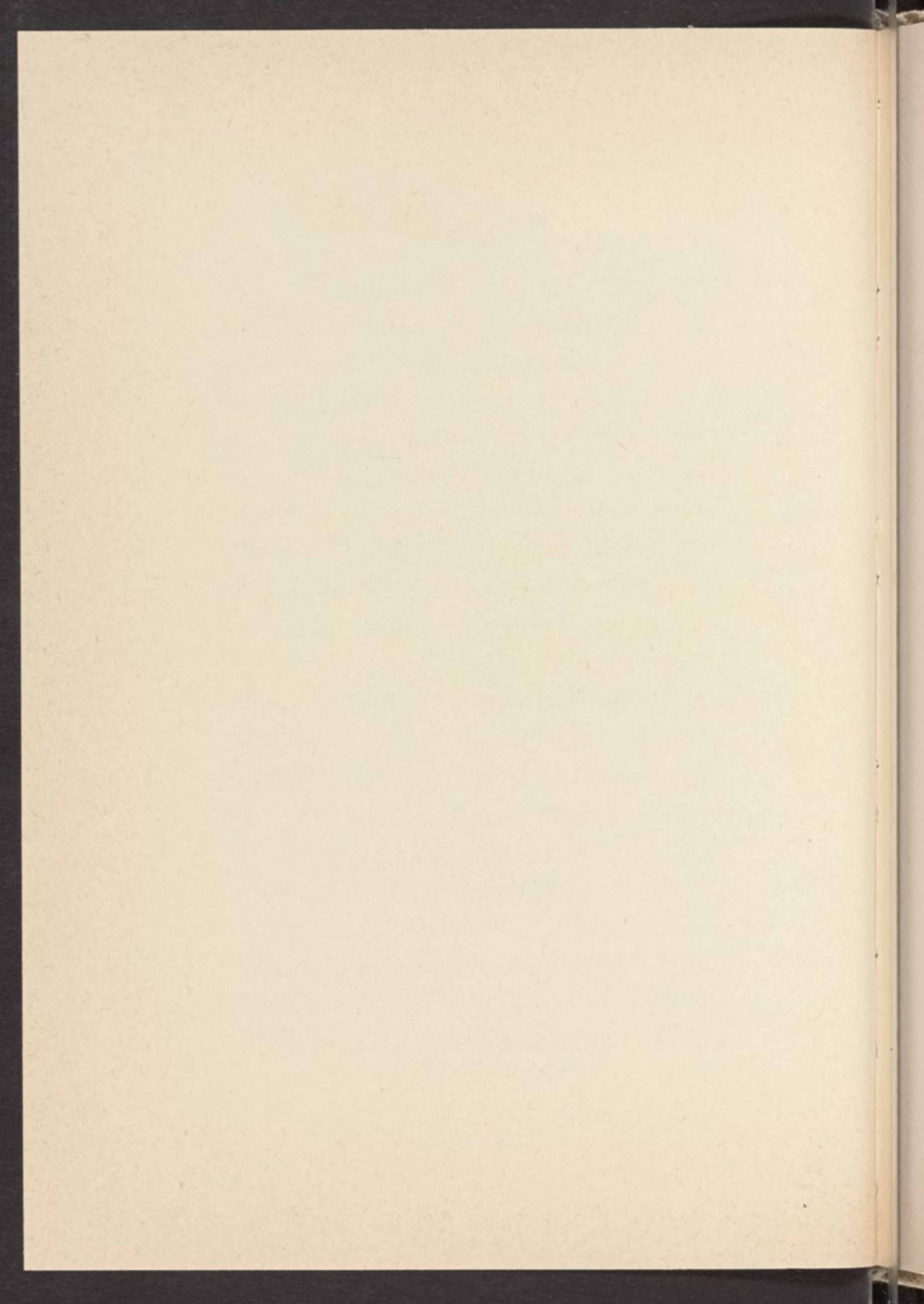
Translated from the Original Italian M.S.

HITHERTO NOT PUBLISHED.

LONDON:

PUBLISHED BY JOHN BOOTH, DUKE TREET, PORTLAND PLACE.

1819.

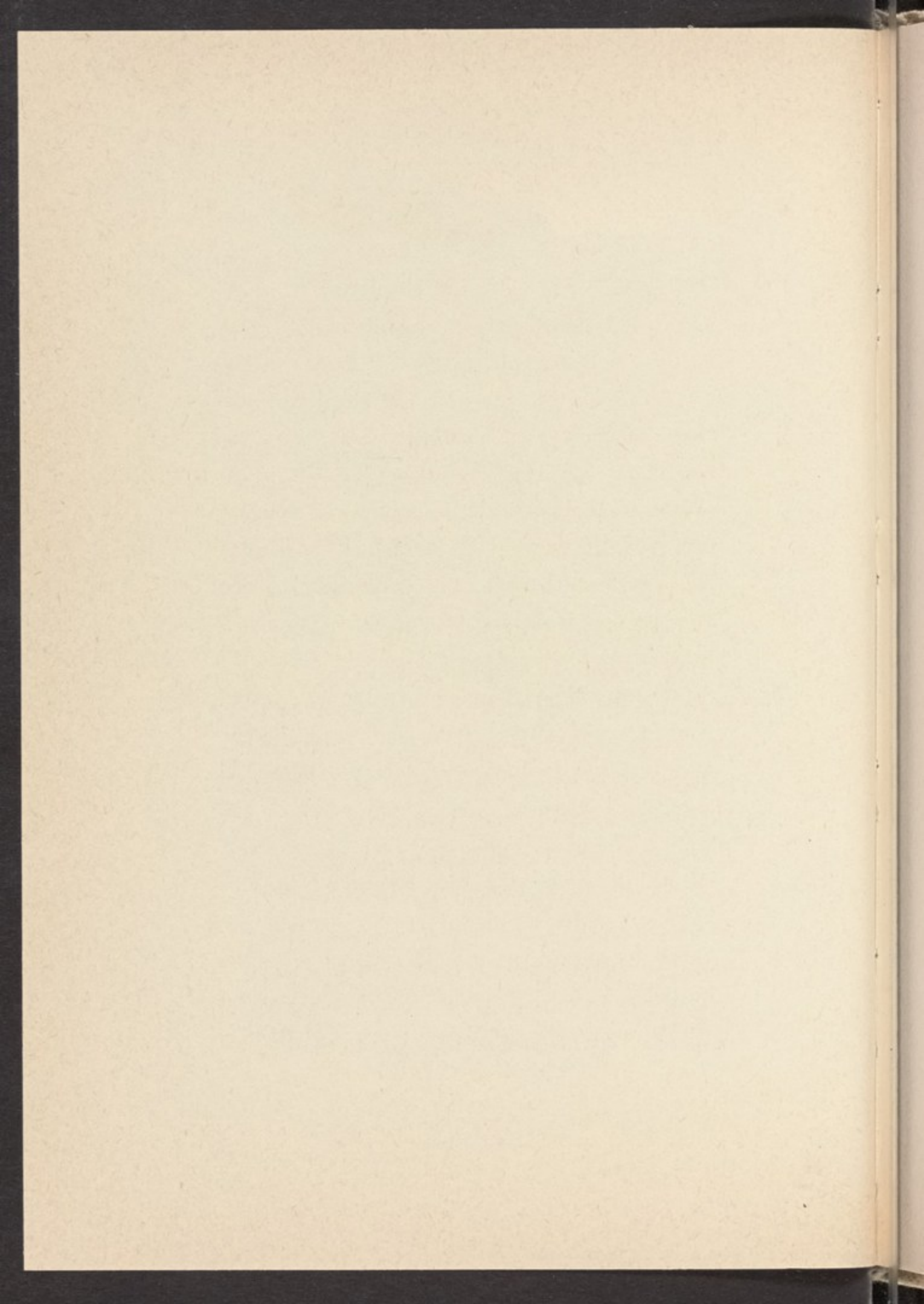


ERRATA.

Page 4, line 24, for Mahamet, read Seyd Mahamet.
—— 33, ——15, for 1802, read 1809.
—— 29, —— 7, for at that place, read in this last place.
—— 38, ——11 and 22, for Alle, read Alee or. Ali.
—— 39. —— 3, for Tarapana, read Tarabà.
—— 45, ——13, Toson Pasha.—Note this is the brother of Ibrahim Pasha who was sent afterwards.
—— 48, ——16 for abu, read or abou.
—— 58, ——19, for Matlak, read by Matlpk.
—— 73, —— 11 and 17, for Lechie Scek, read Zechie Suek.
—— 97, —— 4, for Sabæans, read Sabæanees or Sabiani.
——123, ——24, for the lower class, read every class.
——124, ——24, for Shafee, read a Shafee.
——136, —— 1, to turn a cannon ball.—Note, this is a kind of Italian expression.
——136, —— 7, for Mauriting, read Mauritus.
——147, —— 2, for Raz-el-Keima, read Ras-el-keima.
——163, —— 3, for nilia. read melia.
——153, ——20, for Captain———read Captain Harriet.
——154, —— 6, for Ca.———read Captain Harriet.
——163, ——24, for Irah, read Iràk.

OBSERVATION.

In the course of this history the name of Mahomet has been spelt differently : it would require some delay, to state here the reasons of this change, but I refer the reader to my letters in which I shall submit with all due deference a plan, for writing in English all Oriental words.



PREFACE.

Addressed to those Persons who have kindly subscribed to the Publication of Shaik Mansur's Travels.*

As circumstances, over which I had no control, have compelled me to submit to you this small

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* Upon the Author's first interview with the Sultan Seyd Said, his name was asked; on being told *Vincenzo,* he said, "I do not understand you, tell me the meaning of it in the Arabic language." The Author at this moment remembering that his friend Padre Vincenzo, a missionary in Egypt, was known to the Christian Arabs under the name of *Abou Mansur,* immediately replied *Mansur,* which in Arabic signifies *victorious.* This coincidence gave the Arab Monarch, who entertained the most warlike ideas, great delight, and induced him to exclaim, with seeming pleasure, "Well then I shall always call you *Shaik Mansur.*" (*Shaik* means *chief.*

portion of the work, the publication of which was announced in my prospectus, I think it necessary, in order to avoid any blame that may arise from theappearance of a breach of faith, to relate as succinctly as possible, the unfortunate events which have created an absolute necessity for this alteration in my original plan.

Fortune, which from the very commencement of my existence, has never ceased to persecute me, and crush in the bud every attempt to better my condition, has on this occasion made me the object of her bitterest caprice.

When I first arrived in this metropolis, to suffer the amputation of a leg which had long been afflicted with a chronic disease, the consequence of a neglected strain, I found it necessary, in order to provide the pecuniary means of effecting a cure, to confide the manuscript journal of my travels to a Bookseller of eminence; and, for the purpose of convincing him of the perfect reliance which might be placed in the veracity of my narrative, I took the liberty of addressing a letter to a gentleman whose literary and diplomatic talents have obtained

the universal approbation of the public, and whose conduct toward myself has impressed my heart with a sentiment of gratitude which nothing but dissolution can efface. This kind protector of my humble efforts deigned to reply in a note containing the following expressions: "With the experience that Mr. Vincenzo Mau-"rizi must have had of the Persians, Arabs, and "Turks, Sir Gore Ouseley confidently expects "that his travels must make a very interesting "publication."

I cannot flatter myself that these expressions in my favor are the offspring of personal partiality, but the genuine fruit of the high character for justice and sincerity, which so much distinguish that accomplished personage. I was first known to him at Teheran, in the month of February, 1813, an epoch in which the king of Persia was on the point of concluding a strict alliance with France; one of the conditions of which was to be, that the English should be expelled from his dominions, on account of their political intimacy with Russia; my duty at that time led me to exert all the influence I possessed

to forward this measure; the English Minister of course opposed it, and was at length successful: the little intercourse we had hitherto had, was therefore but little calculated to produce any favorable feeling in his mind toward me.

Notwithstanding this testimonial of the opportunities I had possessed of acquiring information, the Bookseller above-mentioned refused to undertake the publication of my work, on account of the risk which might attend it, and more particularly as the relation of my travels was written in Italian, it would require to be translated into English at an expense, and with a degree of trouble, he did not feel himself disposed to bestow upon my labours. My warmest expectations being thus frustrated, I endeavoured to procure a subscription, and Sir Gore Ouseley, after having read the first ten letters, again stepped forward to my assistance and permitted me to place his name first on the list. But now another difficulty presented itself; where could funds be procured to pay for a translation? This impediment was removed by the generosity of one of my scholars, who

offered to put all the letters into an English dress. Had not this kind benefactor sustained a domestic misfortune, which has caused a temporary interruption to his labours, I should not here be obliged to entreat the indulgence of my friends; but my ill-fortune seems to attach itself to him whose generosity has so much interested him in my welfare. While these proceedings were going on, another of my scholars proposed to translate that portion of my work which is now presented to the public; it is now therefore necessary that I should state the motives which have prevailed upon me to publish it separately from the remainder.

It has been intimated to me, by persons not likely to be deceived, and I have since read in the newspapers, that Ibrahim Pasha, son of Mahamet Ali Pasha commander of Grand Cairo in Egypt, has defeated the Wahabees army, taken by assault Dereja, their capital, and sent Abdullahazis, their Chief, to Constantinople, where the grand Signor has condemned him to an ignominious death. The news influenced me with a great desire to acquaint the world

with the origin of this Mahometan sect, and at the same time to give a sketch of the contents of the contents of my correspondence with Europe while I was in the East. This consists of eighty letters, which relate the eccentric, and the varied lucubrations of my mind; my desire to present these to the public, has continued daily to increase, and I was further stimulated by the recommendation Ihad from the most intelligent traveller and the most skilful diplomatist who has for a long time appeared in the East, a man whose moral and intellectual qualities secured to such a degree the affection of the Persians, that he gained an irresistible influence over the mind of the king, and perhaps prevented those Cossacks whose exertions so effectually aided the efforts made to secure the independence of Europe, from being retained at home to defend their own possessions against an army of 100,000 Persians. The exalted personage above alludedd to, could only indeed testify the opportunities I had had of acquiring useful and interesting information; to detail with fidelity the result of these faci-

lities is my aim, and I have the satisfaction to believe that my endeavours will be fostered by the generous disposition of enlightened minds.

My work is certainly not so entertaining as it might have been made, had I chosen to wander freely through the fields of fancy, and pluck the delicious flowers which appear to invite the hand; but from this course, so tempting to a man, many of whose assertions could hardly have been denied by contrary evidence, my conscience absolutely deterred me; all that I state, simple and unadorned as it may be, is true to the most minute particular.

In order that my subscribers may be able to estimate the quantum of amusement and instruction they are likely to derive, from the letters which shall be published as soon as my most indefatigable exertions can procure a translation, I shall take the liberty as above stated of giving a slight sketch of their contents, as well as of my personal history, and hope that this circumstance will not expose me to a charge of indiscretion or of vain egotism.

PREFACE.

When I first left the Collegio Romano, where I was educated, at that happy period of life, when the buoyancy of hope has not been crushed by repeated disappointments, I found my country torn to pieces by the disastrous consequences of the French invasion, and preferred abandoning the land of my birth, the soil to which every pleasing association of childhood was attached, to the risk of imbruing my hands in the blood of those who were nearest to me in relationship, because the difference of our opinion necessarily placed us in a state of political hostility. They were bigotted to old institutions; I was inflamed by the spirit of liberty, which at that time was fermenting over all Europe. I passed into Greece, to Constantinople, and thence into Asia, making a considerable stay in each country, and obtaining at each step a knowledge of the language and manners of the inhabitants, in the acquisition of both which my profession gave me very uncommon advantages. At the capital of the Ottoman Empire I was physician to the Captain Pasha, Seyd Ali, and was present during a

naval conflict with the Russians. In Anatolia and Egypt my practice among private indi vidu als was very extensive; at Mocca I was considered an accredited agent from the French government; at Muscat I attended the Sultan professionally; and had also the honor of commanding his armies; at Bagdad I prescribed for the chief inhabitants; and in Curdistan I had the post of director of the artillery under Mahomet Ali Mirza, son to the king of Persia: in this last capacity my services became known to Mr. Lindsay, an English officer of rank employed by that monarch. In Aderbijan I was taken prisoner by the Russians, and being released, proceeded to Teheran, where I was nearly successful in the management of a very delicate affair, in which General De Gardane had completely failed. From Persia I went to India, and having touched at Brazil in my way to Europe, met with an unfortunate catastrophe which reduced me to the lowest degree of misery, and the near prospect of dying in an hospital, neglected and abandoned by all.

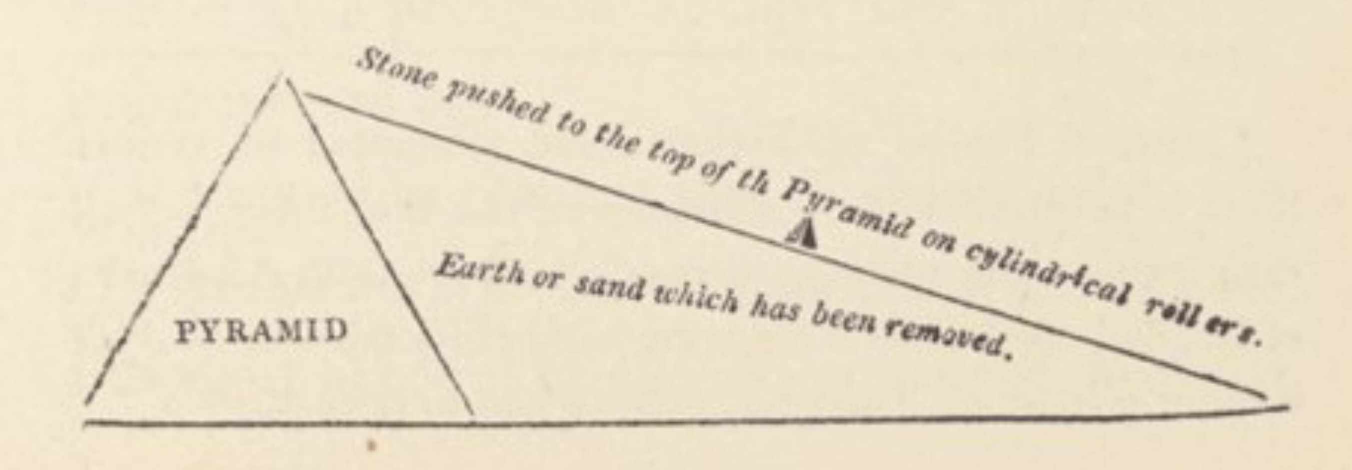
To the science of authorship I make no

pretensions, but the recital of these adventures, however unadorned they may be, must produce a certain interest on the mind, and the truth of my relation can be fortunately confirmed, at every step, by the evidence of living witnesses. The reader, sitting on the banks of the Thames, may follow a long course of extraordinary incidents which have taken place on the shores of the Bosphorus, and the Persian Gulf, or near the mighty streams of the Nile, the Euphrates, the Tigris, and the Ganges. In the course of his travels, Shaik Mansur, who had left Europe a youth unpractised in politics, as well as in the regular manner of travelling, was gradually transformed into an artificial diplomatist: this change in his character is carefully traced, and may please those who are interested in the contemplation of moral and intellectual phenomena.

The materials above described constitute the substance of my eighty letters, which contain chiefly facts which have happened to myself, and which illustrate the characters, customs, religion, and manners, of many populous and celebrated nations. In some places I have

humbly ventured to criticise the policy o various European governments, but have scrupulously avoided repetitions of accounts which are to be found in the works of former travellers.

I have occasionally ventured to tread the path of literature and science, although with a timid and cautious step; and in my observations upon the pyramids of Egypt, I fully coincide with Diodorus Siculus, and I here affirm his hypothesis, according to which those vast edifices were erected, in the then infant state of mechanical knowledge, by supposing that the huge stones which compose those stupendous monuments of pride or folly, were rolled up an inclined plane formed of earth, which was afterwards removed; the annexed sketch will perhaps better demonstrate the idea which seems at least to give a possible explanation of what has hitherto divided the opinions of the learned.



I have now given as shortly as possible the narrative of my travels; a considerable part of them has been already translated, and the whole shall be published, as soon as my limited means, assisted by the most earnest and unremitted endeavours, will allow.

In stating the reasons which have induced me to lay before the public a portion of my labours in what may appear, and really is, in some degree, a mutilated state; it was absolutely necessary that I should make a few remarks on the extraordinary event*, which my own experience, and the foresight of more enlightened observers could not anticipate. These events were as new to me, as my own work will be new to the public. To its decision I look up with an apprehension, mitigated by the confidence that whatever sentence I may finally receive, will be the result of a liberal and

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* Several Pashas of Turkey have attempted at various times to penetrate into the dominion of the Wahabees, but all their endeavours were unsuccessful: about 1805 Ali Pasha of Bagdad reached with his army within fifty miles of Dereja; want of provisions, however, obliged him to retreat.

enlightened criticism. To those benevolent persons who kindly subscribed to my publication I return my most unfeigned and grateful acknowledgements: let them receive their reward, in the knowledge that it was their support in the dark day of affliction, when I was almost overwhelmed by poverty, and disease, and despair, which alone prevented me from absolutely sinking under the fury of the storm!

After wandering over a vast extent of sea and land in every quarter of the globe; after witnessing the effects of almost every gradation of government, from the most unbounded despotism to absolute anarchy; it was upon this happy country that my wishes were at last fixed, and under the protection of her equal laws, and most glorious constitution, I hope, by the exertions of honest industry, to support myself respectably at present, and to secure a comfortable provision against the approach of infirmity and age.

It now only remains that I should relate the circumstances which have enabled me to compose this short account of the Kingdom of Muscat

and the history of its reigning sovereign; as well as to collect the various information which has been compressed into the remainder of this short work; it was originally intended to form a sort of appendix to the letters, and any want of method and regularity which may appear in its arrangement, is to be attributed to this cause.

I first arrived at Muscat in 1809; and Seyd Said immediately appointed me his physician, with a considerable salary. Beside attending on the royal person, my private practice was very extensive: it had always been my custom to collect memoranda in every country through which I passed, and this intercourse with the principal inhabitants of the city, afforded unusual opportunities of acquiring information not merely about the dominions of the Sultan, but also concerning the whole of the extensive province of Homan, and the other territories bordering on the Perian Gulf.

The circumstances attending the death of Beder, could not of course form a general subject of conversation while his murderer occupied his throne, and especially before me, who was

supposed to be so much in his confidence ; yet I may venture to assert, that the account of that horrible atrocity contained in the following pages is entirely true, as it was communicated by one of the principal actors, who could have no motive to deceive, and in the following manner.—

I had heard from an Italian who was in the employ of General de Caen, Governor of the Isle of France, that the commonly received account of Beder's death was not the true one, and that the blow which deprived him of life had, in fact, been struck by a brother's hand. Though incredulous at the moment, from my knowledge of the humanity, and sense of religion and justice, which always appeared in the conduct of Seyd Said, yet being determined to get at the truth, I took occasion to put several questions to the servants of the deceased monarch, which, without disclosing my own suspicion, might indirectly lead to the discovery of theirs. In these conversations, whenever the name of Beder was mentioned, these people would look at each other with a mournful and mysterious air, which at

once confirmed my doubts and piqued my curiosity. At length I received orders from Seyd Said, to visit, professionally, one of his favorite slaves, who had long been afflicted by an ulcer of the most malignant nature. I found my patient a native of Nubia, aged about forty years, of a strong make, and absolutely black complexion. During the course of my attendance, I heard him constantly pouring out imprecations against his master, for leaving him in want, when his services demanded the most ample reward :— these interrupted exclamations soon accused Seyd Said of being his brother's murderer, and I at length learned the exact manner in which this horrible crime was perpetrated, as related in the following work, this Nubian having been, in fact, the person whose hand inflicted the mortal wound.

The short historical sketch, and other particulars, relative to the Vahabees, have been partly drawn from well-known literary sources, but principally from repeated conversations with the Envoy of Saout, their late chief, who was disposed to be extremely communicative in

whatever related to their doctrines, government, and manners; I had also the peculiar good fortune of becoming personally acquainted with Matlak, a chief of high character and rank who had long led their armies to victory, and greatly contributed to extend their power and renown through every part of Arabia.

The account of the Muscatian dominions, the revenues of the present Sultan, and the description of the countries bordering on the Persian gulf, has been chiefly derived from a personal survey, or in default of that, from the best living authorities which it was in my power to procure:—where the accurate and indefatigable Niebuhr could afford me any assistance, I have not hesitated to avail myself of it, and on the other hand I have occasionally remarked any alterations which have taken place since his days.

The personal anecdotes I have selected as worthy of insertion, are such as appeared most characteristic of the opinions and conduct of the people; and here I would remark that any traveller, wishing to observe the genuine and uncorrupted manners of the descendants of

Ishmael, such as they have been since the earliest historical records, should pay the greatest share of attention to the Bedoweens of the desert, rather than to the more civilized inhabitants of the towns and sea coast, who are a mongrel race, daily more and more intermixed with Belluchee, Jedegal, Turkish, Persian, and other emigrants; so that their peculiar habits and opinions are undergoing a gradual assimilation with those of the other inhabitants of the East.

The difficulty of conveying, through the medium of the eye, the correct pronunciation of Asiatic words, and the consequent confusion that has arisen, are well known to every reader. One appellation is sometimes so variously spelt by different authors, as hardly to be recognized for the same; and we may attribute this unfortunate circumstance partly to the peculiar sounds of the Oriental tongues, the distinctions of which can hardly be perceived by an European ear, and still more to the anomalous orthography of the English language. To obviate this difficulty, I have adopted a suggestion of the admirable Sir William Jones, by writing all Arabic,

Persian, and Turkish words in the same characters which I should use to convey to an Italian their real sound, marking at the same time the accented syllables; except where a term has been so thoroughly naturalized in the works of British classics, that it would now be pedantic to attempt a reformation.

On the other hand, in order to assist the reader unacquainted with the Italian language, I have carefully inserted before some words their pronunciation, according to the English orthography, and I hope that this plan, which has, at least, the merit of novelty, may be found to possess other advantages, over any hitherto adopted.

And now to conclude, while I return my sincerest thanks to the translator of this portion of my work, for the assistance he has rendered me; I cannot help stating as a mitigation of the censure which its numerous imperfections may provoke, that he is a gentleman unknown in the paths of literature, and unpractised in the art of composition; while the greater proportion of his time is fully occupied by the urgent calls of a laborious profession. He has no

claim, therefore, to any praise except that of having adhered as faithfully to the original text as the idiomatic differences of the Italian and the English languages would allow; and he hopes that this frank avowal will dispose his readers to regard the result of his labors with a disposition inclined rather to praise than to censure.

Observations

ON THE CLIMATE AND ATMOSPHERE OF THE CITY OF MUSCAT,

DURING THE TWELVE MONTHS OF THE YEAR.

	January.	February	March.	April.	May.	June.	July.	August.	September.	October.	November.	December.
Degrees of heat according to Farenheit's Thermometer at noon in the shade.	from 80 to 84.	from 85 to 88.	from 87 to 89.	from 90 to 92.	from 93 to 96.	from 96 to 98 or 100.	from 96 to 99.	from 94 to 98.	from 92 to 95.	from 91 to 94.	from 90 to 93.	from 85 to 88.
Rain	Never.	Never.	It rains sometimes two or three days but not annually.	Never.	Never.	Some storms with lightnings but without a thunderbolt ever falling.	Never.	Never.	There are some years in which it rains for two or three days.	Never.	Never.	Never.
Fogs	Never.	Never.	Never.	Never.	Never.	Never.	Never.	Never.	Never.	Never.	Never.	Never.
Winds.	Though the Arabians reckon two Monsooms, which they call *Shargy* and *Shemal*, that is the first *South-East* and the latter *North-West*, which blows in the different seasons of the Year; nevertheless at Muscat the Wind is variable almost every week; during the night it blows from the shore till broad day-light, then it changes and blows from the sea; the Arabians call it *Bahary*.											

N.B. When the Wind blows strongly from the *North-West* it is not liable to the usual variations.

In the month of July after a calm day, the Wind blows very warm from the Westward and is called by the Arabians, CABLENAMAS, (that is from Mecca).

There are the traces of many channels in the neighbourhood of Muscat, and Calajat, which doubtless formerly received the waters of torrents. A small stream flows into the sea at Sibi, a maritime village between Burka and Muscat. The Arabian women procure water from it to drink, they told me it was dry in summer. These circumstances render it probable that heavy rains fall at certain periods in the interior of Homan.

HISTORY

OF

SEYD SAID

*Sultan of Muscat.

CHAP. I.

The manner in which Seyd Said, Son of Seyd Sultan eben, or iben, Hemam, or Himàm, obtained the throne of Muscat, or Mascàt.—Account of this city and its territory.—Revenues.—Naval and military forces.

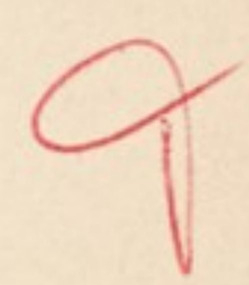
A SCRUPULOUS love of truth ought to accompany every man in whatever he undertakes to describe, but more especially when he pretends to relate historical or geographical facts, the whole utility of which is derived from a strict attention to the rules of veracity; but when,

* I have always styled the sovereign of Muscat, or Mascàt, Sultan, as his subjects universally give him that title; the appellation of Heman, or Himàm, never having been used by them since the time of Seyd Said's grandfather.

to this moral principle the writer unites the advantages of a complete acquaintance with the languages of the nations he describes, the peculiar felicity of having been personally present at the greater part of the events he relates, and a respectable situation which gave him an opportunity of gaining insight into their causes —it is clear that the greatest reliance may be placed upon his accuracy; although his unadorned pages should have no claim to energy of style and rhetorical ornament. After this short statement of my pretensions to entire confidence, I hope that my Readers will derive all the instruction and pleasure from this work which my humble abilities enable me to afford them.

About the year 1805, Seyd Sultan eben, or ìben, Hemam, or Himàm, returning from a naval expedition against the Geovaseom, or Giovasseom, (a people of whom I shall afterwards speak) and resolving to abandon his fleet, and retire secretly on board a small vessel to Muscat, or Mascàt, was suddenly encountered by a band of Pirates in the gulf of Lenghee, or Lenghì, and slain after a most desperate en-

gagement; a certain Shaik, or Scek, named Abdallah, or Abdàlla, by the powerful intercession of money, obtained possession of his body and buried it near where he fell. This unfortunate prince had for a long time disputed the palm of victory with Saout, the third chief of the Wahabees, or Vaàbi; had firmly opposed his aggrandisement, and protected many places from his attacks; during the siege of Bussora, or Bassora, he kept the sea open for the reception of supplies, iu spite of all the efforts of the Wahabees, or Vaàbi, and Geovaseom, or Giovasseom flotillas, and merited to such a degree the approbation of the Pasha, or Pascià, of Bagdad, that he obtained a decree, ordering the city he had preserved to pay him an annual tribute; but when the enemy was repulsed the obligation was forgotten, and constant refusals to liquidate this pension gave rise to disputes between the cities of Muscat, or Mascàt, and Bussora, or Bassora.



We are now come to three sons of Seyd Sultan eben, or ìben, Hemam, or Himàm, who had no sooner heard of the death of their unhap-

py father than they mutually formed intrigues which might facilitate their succession to his dominions.—Seyd Bader, or Beder, the eldest, assumed the reins of government, and although he tyrannised over his younger brothers, yet he could not avoid granting them some few honors and marks of distinction. He gave to Seyd Said the command of Burka, or Burca, a town about thirty miles from Muscat, or Mascàt, while that of Monsanah, or Monsanaà, an adjacent village, was bestowed on Seyd Salem, the third in birth. This arrangement for some time gave a truce to their intrigues, but the tranquillity was of short duration. In the mean time Saout, who was an active politician and brave warrior, having learned the death of his most powerful enemy, about 1806, despatched a considerable force against Muscat, or Mascàt. The intestine dissentions were calmed in appearance on the approach of so powerful an enemy, but the impoverished state of the pubic treasury retarded those measures necessary to arrest a torrent which threatened a general destruction: at length Mahamet, or Maamét Cal-

fan, brother of the deceased Sultan, whose conduct had gained him the confidence and respect of his nephews, having persuaded them to lay aside their disputes, furnished some money to raise troops, and form an army capable of repulsing the invaders. Seyd Beder, assumed the command and advanced to Bramee, or Bremi, a town on the confines of his dominions, to prevent the Vaàbi from advancing. This prince, whose courage was conspicuous, did all in his power to repulse the assailants, but being finally overwhelmed by superior numbers, saw no other chance of escaping destruction, except by the conclusion of a treaty with Saout, the conditions of which would have been ignominious, had they not been absolutely necessary. The following were the principal stipulations:—

1st. That Seyd Beder should possess, without molestation, the kingdom of Mascàt; but should send annually to Dereia, or Dereja, a tribute of 50,000 dollars.

2nd. That an envoy from Saout thould constantly reside at Mascàt, to take care that

the citizens duly observed all the rites and ceremonies of the religion of Abdulwahab, or Abdulvaàb.

3d. That 400 Vaàbi cavalry should occupy the neighbourhood of Burca, to prevent any infraction of the treaty.

4th. That Beder, as a tributary chief, and convert to the new sect, should obey in every thing the orders of Saout, and assist the Vaàbi government whenever his aid was required.

Although by this convention, Beder, became the humble tributary of Saout, yet the bitter feeling of degradation was in some degree assuaged by the acquisition of a powerful protector, who thus publicly declared him Sultan and chief of his family. It was commonly reported that the 400 cavalry were stationed at Burca, at his own particular request, in order to defend him in case his brothers should excite any revolutionary movement; but all his precautions could only retard the impending evil, even if its approach were not accelerated by such unpopular remedies.

On the return of Beder, to Mascàt, he commenced a system of arbitrary government; but, in order to elucidate what follows, it is necessary to mention in this place, that the sovereigns of Mascàt had long been protected by a body of foreign troops, answering to the Swiss guards of some European monarchs; these ragamuffins were called Belluchees, or Bellùcci, and Jedegals, or Gedegàls; the former are natives of Mekran, or Mecràn, whom the poverty of their own country compels to enter into foreign service; the latter a robust and courageous body of men from Sindy, or Sindì, who had chosen to seek their fortunes under the banners of the late Sultan. These veteran troops were sincerely attached to all the sons of their late master, and their fidelity, consequently, became suspected by Beder, who wished it to centre in himself alone; he, therefore, made preparations for disbanding them, and, at the same time, formed a body guard out of the 400 Vaábi, stationed at Burca. Seyd Said, on the other hand, observing with a jealous eye the general conduct of his brother, and

the particular effects of the treaty he had concluded, determined to miss no opportunity of attacking him, and the present appeared peculiarly favorable. He began by blaming publicly the conduct of Beder, especially in the presence of the Bellùcci and Gedegàls, who being well aware that a design to disband them was in agitation, did not hesitate to adopt his views, and entered into a conspiracy to dethrone their master, the very first time he should disappoint them.

It happened some months after these political intrigues were in agitation that Seyd Salem arrived at Mascàt, without the permission of Beder, and was threatened with death for his disobedience; the affrighted youth fled secretly to Burca, and Seyd Said received him into his fortress; his incensed brother soon heard the truth, demanded that the fugitive should be surrendered, abrogated some privileges previously enjoyed by his protector, and at the same time deprived him of a favorite and beautiful horse, a bequest of their deceased father. Beder also declared that if Said Salem was not delivered

up within three days, and all his other injunctions promptly obeyed, he should himself proceed to Burca, and insist, in person, on the execution of his commands. Seyd Said declined submission, and prepared for defence, at the same time informing his faithful adherent the jemadar or gemadàr, or commander of the Bellùcci and Gedegàls, of all that was going forward, and that it was his fixed resolution to put his brother to death if he dared to shew himself at Burca: in fact that prince, trusting in his courage and insisting on obedience to his orders, sailed towards the place, accompanied by a few attendants; but, while on his voyage to the town, he was thus accelerating his destiny; Seyd Said confided his intention to his cousin, Seyd Maamèt, ìben Nasser, and fully concerted with him the manner of that fratricide which he had so long meditated.

At this time Beder imprudently arrived in the road without having informed the 400 Vaàbi, who were foraging in the vicinity, of his intention; he immediately disembarked, walked

towards the city, entered the castle, and penetrated the very room where Seyd Said and Seyd Maamèt, iben Nasser were seated; a Nubian slave stood sentry at the door, who was also an accomplice in the plot, and from whom I have derived all the particulars of its execution The unhappy man incautiously sat down between his cousin and brother, and immediately began to reproach the latter for his disobedience, repeating every thing which he had formerly signified by letter. Seyd Said, without uttering a word, most dexterously disarmed the Prince of the dagger that hung at his side, and plunged it into his left breast; the black slave at the same time closing the door; but the wound not being very deep, Beder instantly started up, and, finding the door shut, threw himself from the window on a heap of dung, which prevented his receiving any injury from the fall, and entering the stable, where he found a horse saddled, according to the custom of the Arabians, who always have them ready in order to facilitate an escape in the hour of danger, mounted and gallopped towards the

place where his faithful Vaàbi were quartered. Seyd Said, Seyd Maamèt ìben Nasser, and the Nubian, mounted also and followed him, directing their course through a wood of date trees by the dust which the horse of their victim raised: Seyd Said, being well armed and mounted on the courser bequeathed to him by his father, at length passed Beder, and turned him towards the right, where Seyd Maamèt ìben Nasser encountered him, and with his sabre struck him so severely upon the right shoulder, that, losing their balance from the vehemence of the blow, both himself and his horse fell to the ground. Taking advantage of the fall of one of his assassins, the unhappy fugitive still boldly pressed on, though losing blood at every step, and almost reached a spot, whence he could have seen the tents of his Vaàbì friends; his escape now seemed even probable, but at this moment the Nubian overtook and transfixed him with his lance.

Esce a Beder in più d'un luogo il sangue,
E ne versa per tutto a gran torrenti;
Già nelle sceme forze il corpo langue,
Siccome fiamma in debili alimenti.
Said al rimirar del frate esangue
Par che voglia inseguirlo a passi lenti,
Ma s'avanza quel servo traditore,
E getta in terra morto il suo signore.

Come una quercia che d'annose chiome
Folta, e pesante và crollando al suolo,
Piegando le cervici vinte, e dome
Dal ferro, che rimbomba in tutto il polo.
Così Beder; ed al germano, oh come!
Crollogli il cuore da un' occulto duolo,
Mentre la voce stessa di natura
Gli predice ogni male, ogni sciagura.

Seyd Said, well foreseeing the consequence of his crime, returned into the castle, accompanied by the greater part of his adherents, and particularly directed Seyd Maamèt iben Nasser to secrete himself within the fort; at the same time he despatched another of his satellites to spread exaggerated reports throughout the country, and to alarm the Arabs, by a relation that Beder had been slain by the Vaàbi.

While these measures were in progress, the 400 cavalry having accidentally heard from a woman the fate of Beder, while peacefully foraging their horses, armed themselves, mounted and surrounded the castle of Burca, demanding that the chief of his murderers should be delivered up to them. Seyd Said protested his innocence, and ordered them to make diligent search after Seyd Maamèt iben Nasser, whom he declared to be the only regicide. The Vaàbi, who were well aware of the falsehood of this assertion, from their knowledge of the intrigues that had so long been in agitation, forced the gates of the castle, declaring that the assassin was still within its walls. Seyd Said, finding the case hopeless, prepared for defence, when he was delighted to observe a cloud of dust raised by the Arabs, who crowded towards the town, in order to revenge the death of their prince on his supposed murderers; every part was soon filled with confusion, and cries of death to the Vaàbi, who finding it impossible to prove their innocence, or to contend against such superior numbers, retired into the open country,

which afforded them facilities for defence; and afterwards marched to Dereia, threatening Seyd Said with the vengeance of the redoubtable Saout. The Arabs of the country quickly pursued, which restored the town to a degree of tranquillity, and gave to Seyd Said an opportunity of embarking with two or three of his most faithful adherents, and proceeding to Mascàt, without having communicated his design to Seyd Maamèt iben Nasser; there finding the whole population in his favor, and especially the Bellùcci and Gedegàls, he caused himself to be proclaimed Sultan, in the 26th year of his age, and ascended a throne sprinkled with a brother's blood.

After some hours Said Maamèt iben Nasser left his hiding place, and having before agreed with Seyd Said that the supreme power should be divided between them, if the conspiracy succeeded, was astonished to hear of his accomplice's treachery, and hastened to Mascàt in order to claim his share of the booty. When the new Sultan saw him arrive, he attempted to keep him at bay by fair words, promising to

fulfil their agreement in a few days; in the mean time he was secretly blaming his conduct to all the principal people, and declaring him to be the sole murderer of Beder, while he did not hesitate to communicate to the Gedegàls and Bellùcci the whole extent of his pretensions. These mercenaries, in concert with the Sultan, unanimously resolved upon his death, but Seyd Maamèt ìben Nasser, who had learned suspicion from his own treachery to another, soon perceived the design that was in preparation, and fled secretly to Zecchìe, a town of the interior, about five days journey from Mascàt; at this place, where he had formerly resided, he prepared for defence, and wrote to implore the protection of Saout, while Seyd Said enjoyed in tranquillity the fruit of his atrocity, and Seyd Salem was content with the possession of Monsanà.

The young prince began his reign by paying much deference to the chiefs who bore the greatest sway in the country; but in the affairs of government he principally consulted his uncle, Seyd Maamèt ìben Calfan, who seeing no

means of repairing the mischief that had already happened, thought that the safety of his nephew would most conduce to the welfare of the kingdom, and therefore advised him to behave with greater prudence in future, and to send a Shaik, or Scek, to Dereia, with a conciliatory letter for Saout.

The following were the contents of the dispatch: it first expressed the grief and indignation of Seyd Said at the atrocity of the crime which called him to fill a brother's throne; and mentioned that his only murderer had fled to Zecchie, in order to escape the punishment he merited, and pretended to have claimed the protection of the Vaàbi; that the Sultan could not believe Saout would wish to defend the assassin of his former friend, but expected on the contrary that he would take measures for imprisoning him, should he fall in his power; at the same time he declared his readiness to fulfil all the stipulations of the treaty concluded by Beder, and assured Saout that the 400 cavalry might consequently return to Burca, and enjoy peaceably all the privileges that had been before

granted them. The letter concluded with a review of all that had passed, accompanied by professions of the greatest respect and veneration for the Vaàbi doctrines and government. Saout, who had been already informed, by his resident at Mascàt, of what had really occurred, answered with equal dissimulation, and complied with all the requests of Seyd Said, excepting that relating to the return of the 400 Vaàbi; this he declined, because, in reality, nobody chose to hazard himself in so dangerous a station; he also expressed a wish that Seyd Maamèt iben Nasser might be pardoned, and left in peaceable possession of Zecchìe. By this policy the court of Dereia designed to foster the rival of a tributary, whom they had so much reason to suspect. On the other hand, Seyd Said completely perceived all the hollowness of this pretended friendship, while the inferiority of his force, however, obliged him to dissemble, and reserve his design of taking revenge on his late accomplice, and restoring the independence of his country, to a more favorable opportunity.

Seyd Said is a good looking young man, of moderate stature and florid complexion; his manners are lively and agreeable, and he possesses a sound understanding, which always makes him eager to acquire information from the Europeans who arrive at Mascàt, concerning those arts which his own countrymen cannot teach him. His constant love of justice, and distinguished clemency, the effects of which are felt, not only by his own subjects, but even by his domestic slaves, make us endeavor to forget the deep atrocity of that crime which placed him on the throne.

The city of Mascàt, his residence, is situated upon a promontory, extending some distance into the sea, in 23 de. 32 min. north latitude, and being surrounded by rocky and lofty mountains, which reflect the rays of a burning sun, the heat is very troublesome to the inhabitants, and still more so to foreigners who are unaccustomed to it. For a particular account of the weather, I beg leave to refer my readers to a meteorological table at the end of the work; but to give a more lively idea of the effects of

the climate, I cannot avoid relating a circumstance which fell under my own observation:—An Arab had been killed by the blow of a sabre, which laid open his brain, and on examining the wound it appeared that the dura mater was completely divided; and this membrane was so coarse and hard that it resembled the sole of a slipper, a phenomenon so extraordinary that I can only attribute to the powerful influence of the solar rays. The Arabs of this province never cover their heads at any period of the year, excepting only the chiefs, the merchants, and a few of the citizens of Mascàt. A few Bedoweens, Beduini, or Bedù, also wear the fes, which is so generally used in other parts of the East. As the heat is so excessive, the Sultan and some principal chiefs visit Burca in the months of June and July, in order to enjoy a more agreeable temperature than the city affords.

The port of Mascàt is circular, and is formed by an islet about an Italian mile in circumference, which is immediately opposite the city, and renders the anchorage very secure; some wells in the neighbourhood afford a supply of

excellent water; vegetables, and fruit also abound: the latter consists of dates, lemons, oranges &c. &c. Poultry are reared in large quantities, the cattle are numerous, and to be bought very cheaply. The sea affords plenty of fish, which, together with rice and dates, form the chief sustenance of the inhabitants; and the surplus of the former, extraordinary as it may appear, principally supports their oxen, cows, and other cattle. If the master of a ship is desirous of having the very best water, he should fill his casks at some wells about a mile inland; although that of the Sarcar (which is furnished by the government) is very tolerable, since the Sultan has caused a canal to be dug, which conveys it to the beach. Upon the whole there is no place so well provided with this first necessary in the Gulf of Persia; a circumstance which has perhaps mainly contributed to its commercial superiority.

The shores of the Muscatian territory abound with an infinite number of shell fish of fine flavor and beautiful shells, a great portion of which are constantly found without inhabi-

tants; they are often dragged up from the bottom of the sea, where the brilliant variety of their colours render them conspicuous at a considerable depth, for the water is as clear as crystal. When the sky was unclouded during the absence of the moon, I have found the nights almost as light as when that luminary, in European countries, shines in all her splendor, from the brightness of the stars, and the coruscation of the waves, on whose bosom each planet and constellation was painted in its original glory; to this may be added, that the sea universally abounds with many tribes of phosphorescent animals. The lofty rocks which surround the port of Mascàt, are totally without vegetable covering, except a few stunted bushes; yet foxes, called talep by the Arabs, are found on the island which forms its entrance; these animals can have no means of sustenance, except the fish they may chance to catch; water there is none but what may remain in the crevices of the rocks after rain, but this must be an uncommon resource, as sometimes not a shower falls during a whole year; in that case, therefore,

the blood of the fish can be the only liquid within their reach.

The greater part of Mascàt is well built of stone, and when I left it, Seyd Said was busily erecting a handsome palace in the style of European architecture; which, when completed, will form an agreeable contrast with the more ancient part of the town. A church built by the Portuguese, in 1530, is still in existence; in appearance it resembles a monastery, and serves as a place of judicature; the present name, El Gresa, is doubtless corrupted from the Portuguese, Egreja, which signifies church.

Seyd Said has surrounded his capital with a thin wall, but the barrier of steep rocks which nature has formed, and on which watch towers are erected, and sentries constantly placed, afford it a much more secure protection. Two old Portuguese castles defend the port, of which one is formidable from its size and advantageous situation on the summit of a peninsulated rock: the largest is called by the Arabs, Maranee or Meràni, and the smaller, Jelalee, or Gelàli; perhaps these names may bear some resemb-

lance to the original appellations. There are also two batteries erected by the Arabs.

The population of Mascàt is considerable, though its exact amount is uncertain from the constant influx of foreigners, produced by its extensive trade; the merchants are numerous, some of them possessing capitals of a million of dollars; among the citizens are 4000 Banians, or Beniani, whose industry is particularly conspicuous; there are few Jews, and no Christians, except accidental travellers.

In the want of correct data, I shall not probably exceed the reality by stating the number of inhabitants, in 1802, to have been near 60,000. The common dress is a cloak of white linen or fine muslin, with a turban to cover the head; but such expensive articles can only be afforded by those in good circumstances; the poor here as in the greater part of Arabia, are half naked; and it is a general custom among them to wear a leathern girdle which keeps their rags together; this ligature is so tight that it forms a cicatrice on the skin of the loins and serves to hold paper, an inkstand, a knife;

in short, whatever they possess; for an Arab, like another Diogenes, usually carries all his worth upon his person. The women seldom wear veils, except the wives of the Sceks, who imitate the general dress of Oriental ladies, and the richer class of courtesans from Persia, and other countries, who swarm in this capital, and are considered the most beautiful women of Homan.

The municipal administration of Mascàt is directly superintended by Seyd Said himself, or in his absence by some of his nearest relations; and the police resembles that of other Oriental cities, in being absolutely despotic, and often directed by superstition and caprice; however, the property of individuals is generally safe, and particularly of Europeans, on account of the respect in which the English are held; notwithstanding that the Arabs detest the Franks, and are often laying plots against them, the traveller will sometimes meet with instances of great friendship when he most stands in need of assistance.

In this country, exposed to a burning sun,

totally without amusement, and seeing no specimen of the "human face divine" but the brown sombre countenance of the Arab, a stranger suffers a degree of melancholy, which often at length affects his health, as the reader will perceive from my own experience in another part of this work.

The following are a few observations on the topography of this country, which some journeys into the interior enabled me to collect.

About three miles from Mascàt, the road divides into three, of which, that on the right leads over steep rocks to Mutrah, or Matrà, a town situated on the sea shore, about two miles to the north-west of the capital; the centre road, after four hours journey, conducts the traveller to Reean, or Rìan, an inland village; while that on the left runs in a south-easterly direction by the maritime village of Sadab, or Sedab. At Rìan there is a point where the roads from the interior provinces unite; and here, also, passes a wall, which forms a semicircle round Mascàt, crossing over the mountains near Felk, or Felc, where Seyd Maamèt ìben Calfan has a very

beautiful castellated house. The small domain of Felc is rendered extremely fertile by a fine stream of water, which rises in one part of it. The above wall, which is built of large stones laid one upon the other, is from 8 to 10 feet in height, and extends from Matrà to Sedab, a distance of about 20 miles.

By proceeding from Rìan to the south-south-east, one arrives at the town of Bushier, or Buscier, a moderate day's journey, or about 24 miles, from Mascàt, where the road divides into two; one leading in a south-easterly direction to Rasalgata, and the other to the mountains of Eben-rui, or Iben-ruai, on the south-west. At Buscier are some warm springs, to which the inhabitants of the surrounding country continually resort, for the purpose of bathing. If the traveller directs his journey from Rìan to the west, leaving Buscier on the left, he will reach the provinces of Ismael and Zecchìe; while, by keeping to the north-west, he will skirt the towns and villages forming the maritime possessions of the Sultan. To conclude, Seyd Said reigns over a country stretching from north-

west to south-east, along the shores of the Persian Gulf, about 300 Italian miles; while his dominions do not generally extend into the interior more than four or five days journey, or about 100 miles. Setting out from the lofty mountains of Rasalgata, at the foot of which is the town of Suree, or Sùri, and more to the north-west Calayat, or Calajat, both surrounded by fertile plains, one arrives in the provinces which form part of Afaar;—Guialan, or Ghiàlàn, Zecchìe, &c.

The frontiers of this country, towards the north-west, terminate near the city of Bremi, which is situated about four days journey, or near 100 miles, from the sea. This place belongs to the Vaàbi, and near it commences a desert which extends to Dereia, their capital; camels are twenty days in passing through this vast wilderness.

To the north of Bremi, where the line of frontier joins the sea, we find the town of Chinas, or Cinàs, and the province belonging to the Giovasseom; all that part of the dominions of the Sultan, hitherto described, are contained

within the large portion of Arabia called Homan. An enterprising traveller might certainly succeed in passing by land from Muscàt to Mocca, according to the information I have received from a friendly Bedù, who asserted that springs of water like that at Felc, were every where to be found; and that the villages, though seated among burning rocky mountains, were enabled to afford all the other necessaries of life, by the comparative fertility of the land at the foot of them. Nobody, however, undertakes this journey, because the Arabs generally believe the people on the other side the mountains of Iben-ruai to be cannibals, who devour white men and negroes indiscriminately.

This opinion arises from the interrupted communication between the Muscatians and the people of Adramauth, on whose shores vessels never even anchor. The present Sultan, besides his dominions on the western shore of the Persian Gulf, which we have been hitherto describing, possesses all the maritime part of Mecràn, as far as the territory of Kutch, or Checc, in Sindì, together with the city of Bender Abasi or

or Gondrum, on the opposite shore of the gulf and the islands of Kesm, Larek, and Ormuz; the island of Zanguebar, called by the Arabs Souhaelee, or Suaeli, also acknowledges his sway.

The slave trade is carried on to a great extent at that place, which is much frequented both by Europeans and Arabs, for the purpose of purchasing the negroes, constantly arriving from the interior of Africa; and it is computed that the Sultan derives an annual revenue of 75,000 dollars from this impious traffic.

The customs of Mascàt are farmed to a rich Beniani at a rent of 180,000 dollars annually; 5,000 are paid for liberty to export salt from the mines at Ormuz, while Kesm, Larek and Bender Abasi, produce about an equal sum. The Bellùcci of Mecran pay a tribute, which, though small, is indeed rendered heavy by their extreme poverty, but the Sultan derives his chief revenues from the provinces immediately under the jurisdiction of Mascàt. The demands on the treasury are not large, although Seyd Said retains constantly in his pay, 2,000 foreign

soldiers, who have been already described, and some hundreds of Arabs, together with his own negro slaves, which form, when united, a body of about 3,000 men; he also possesses several three-masted ships which in time of peace are sent to India as merchantmen; while in time of war, they receive on board a considerable number of troops, and exercise in the Persian gulf. In case of hostilities, he has the means of increasing his army, to 15,000 or 20,000 infantry, and 1,000 cavalry, to whose equipment all the merchants contribute, as the ordinary revenues would be insufficient to support so great an addition of expense; altogether, public and private, the city of Mascàt possesses forty square rigged vessels, from 300 to 700 tons, which are almost all English prizes purchased at the Isle of France during the late war, beside davs, (a large kind of Arab ship) and small vessels, which will be incidentally described in other parts of this publication.

CHAP. II.

A description of the provinces, cities, and people, on the shores of the Persian Gulf, with observations on the changes that have taken place since the time of Niebuhr.—Historical sketch of the Vaàbi.

Although this Chapter appears to be a digression from the History, it is here inserted, in order to elucidate more clearly the remainder of the work.

To the north of the kingdom of Mascát are the towns of Chinas, or Cinàs, Cor-kielb, or Cor-chielb, Corfokan, or Corfoccan, Sharga, or Sciàrga, Algezira, or Elgezira, Benias, or Benjàs, and Ras-el-Keima, which are all possessed by an Arabic tribe, called Giovasseom, wholly unnoticed by Niebuhr; and, whose capital is the city last mentioned. Their founder

was a Scek named Giasom, who pitched his tent on a point of land a little elevated above the sea shore, which being very conspicuous to all ships passing by, the sailors called the place Ras-el-Keima, which, in Arabic, signifies the point of the tent; and in process of time, a town being built, the original name was transferred to it. Scek Giasom had a numerous offspring, who, profiting by the advantages of their situation, became in a few generations a considerable tribe; and finding their possessions insufficient to maintain them, passed over the Gulf, and formed an ėstablishment on the coast of Fars, where they built the flourishing towns of Chiarek, or Ciarèk, Lenghee, or Lenghì, and Left; besides many villages, whose inhabitants form one state with their brethren on the other side of the Gulf, and still bear the original appellation.

During the reign of Abdullahazis, or Abdallazis, second commander of the Vaàbi, the Giovasseom embraced the doctrines of the rising sect, and became engaged in constant hostilities with all their neighbours, but particularly the

ruler of Mascàt: in the year 1808, their Sultan was named Messaghara, or Messaghéra, and his exploits, as chief of the most destructive band of pirates that infest the Arabian seas, will occupy a considerable part of our attention hereafter.

On the north-west of the Giovasseom dominions is situated the island of Baharem, or Baarém, famous for its pearl fishery, and the town of Katife, or Catife, belonging to a Scek named Maamét iben Salama, whose vicinity to Dereia has compelled him to submit to the superior power of Saout. The first place of any consequence to the north of Catife, is Grain, or Grein, possessed by an Arabic tribe called Atoùb, which is not mentioned by Niebuhr, unless it be the same which he calls Etba. The people of this tribe are in alliance with the Vaàbi, but not under subjection to them, and are universally considered the most skilful and intrepid mariners of Arabia. More to the north, on the western shore of the Gulf, is the town of Zubbarra, whose Scek obeys the authority of his neighbour the governor of Bassora.

Having thus coasted the western shore of this great inland sea, we must pass the Euphrates, called by the Arabs Shat-el-Arab, or Sciàt-el-Arab; the first people that then present themselves are the tribe called Tchiab, or Ciàb, whose possessions extend to Shister Despul, or Scister Despul, and are almost inclosed in the Persian provinces, to whose monarch part of them are subject, while the remainder acknowledge the sway of the governor of Bassora; so that not a shadow of the power which they enjoyed in the time of Niebuhr now remains. Bender Rega, or Bender Riga, is only a deserted village, but descending the coast of Hendian, or Indiàn, we find the town of Buscier, the principal point of entrance into Persia, and at this time subject to the Shah, or Scià, who appoints, from time to time, a governor; at this place an English consul also constantly resides, to overlook the interest of the East India Company. The town is built upon a point of land stretching into the sea, and is surrounded by a wall. Farther to the south-east is Kan-goun, or Can-gùn, a place of some importance, situated at the extremity of

a bay bearing the same name; it is under the jurisdiction of Buscier. About 60 miles from Kan-gùn, is the town of Aseiò, belonging to Scek Nasser; and to the south the country, as already described, is subject to the Giovasseom. To the south-east of Bender Abasi is Mennavee, or Mennàvi, governed by a Scek, who pays tribute to Seyd Said. Along the remaining coast of Mecran, the only port is that of Kormaro, opposite to Mascàt, and occupied within a short period by the Giovasseom, who have expelled the Scek appointed by Seyd Said.

All the places described in this chapter, produce a large quantity of dates, excepting the coast of Persia, where the trees are not sufficiently numerous even to furnish the native population with this staff of life. The rocky and sandy territory of Mascàt is adorned with a few gardens, fertilized by the water drawn from neighbouring wells; the plains of Burca and Sahara, or Saàra, are much more productive; while Rostok, or Rostoc, situated a day's journey, or about 24 miles from the sea, is called the garden of Ara-

bia. From Bassora the dates are exported to other countries, and Bender Abasi is the place of deposit for the exquisite fruit brought from the interior of Persia, and from thence sent to Mascàt.

I shall now endeavour to give a succinct account of that extraordinary people whose rapid progress has so completely changed the political relations of almost every country in this part of the world.

About the middle of the last century, a man named Abdulwahab, or Abdulvaàb, a native of Hellah, or Ellaà, on the banks of the Euphrates, pretended to have a vision, in which a flame appeared to issue from his body and burn to ashes all the neighbouring country; he confided the extraordinary circumstance which had befallen him to a Mullah, or Mullà, and the interpreter of the will of heaven declared that this sign portended the birth of a son, who should become the founder of a new religion, and perform extraordinary actions. Soon afterwards the wife of Abdulvaàb really became pregnant, and bore him a son, who was named Maamét.*

* This happened about the year 1757.

The tribe of Neshdee, or Nescedì, to which the family belonged, soon imbibed the doctrines which appeared to be sanctioned by divine authority, and Abdulvaàb, as general of an army and prophet of a rising sect, had an opportunity of spreading his political power, and the opinions of the new faith, which he considered himself commissioned to promulgate; while his son accompanied him, and was shewn to all as the precious pledge of Almighty approbation towards the Vaàbi religion. After Abdulvaàb's death Maamèt succeeded in this command, but being blind, was obliged to employ, as his deputy, in all affairs of state except those relating to religion, a person named Abdallazis, an adopted brother of his father's.

This minister followed up the victories of the deceased prophet with the greatest facility. As the first barriers of opposition had been already overthrown, it would be very difficult, and perhaps useless, to name all the Scek who resisted in arms the aggrandisement of the Vaàbi, or the particular periods of their several conquests; but at the death of the chief

last mentioned, almost all the interior of the Arabian peninsula acknowledged their political and religious sway. Abdallazis succeeded to the supreme authority, and greatly extended the limits of their power, having sacked Mecca and Medina and destroyed the tomb of Mahomet, whom he declared to be a deceiver, and not a messenger of heaven ; he also penetrated to the gates of Aleppo and Bagdad, massacred a caravan of Persian pilgrims on their route to visit the burial place of Alle, or Elì, at Ellaà, and plundered that depository of the accumulated wealth of ages. Bassora, also, was threatened with destruction, but a relation of the enterprize of the Giovassem, against that celebrated town must be deferred to another part of this work.

Saout succeeded Abdallazis in his power and good fortune, and dying in the year 1813, was replaced by Abdallazis the 2nd, present commander of the Vaàbi. In the above mentioned year Maamèt Elì Pashà of Cairo, retook Mecca and Medina, which he still retains, but has been unable hitherto to push his conquests into

the interior, on account of the scarcity of water and provisions necessary to support a Turkish army. In 1814, the Othmans advanced to Tarapanà, a short distance from Dereia, but were soon obliged to retreat from the incessant attacks of the Vaàbi cavalry, who surrounded the line of march, and destroyed all the wells which their general Toson Pashà, son of Maamèt Elì Pashà, caused to be dug. I cannot give my reader a better description of this singular people, than by transcribing a conversation which took place between myself and the envoy of Saout at Mascàt.

I began by observing that I wished to visit Dereia, and practise medicine there, and should be glad to be informed whether I should run any risk in doing so.

Mahamet. On the contrary, the employment will be very profitable; because, although we hate infidels, yet we esteem men of talent, and particularly physicians. If you embrace our religion, you will reach the very summit of happiness.

Author. What are the articles of your faith?

Mah. We do not differ from other Musaleems, or Muselìms (Mussulmen) except in thinking that Mahomet arrogated to himself too much authority; and, that the Koran was sent to the earth by the hands of angels, and not of that man, who has even dared to falsify many of its doctrines; we also consider that the prophets, and especially Maamèt ìben Abdulvaàb, were beings like ourselves; and, therefore, not worthy of being addressed in prayer, although deserving of admiration and imitation for their piety and moral conduct. There is but one God, the Koran is his word, and mankind his children, who are bound to love him, in return for the proofs of his affection they are constantly receiving. True believers are strictly enjoined to persecute infidels, and oblige them to adopt the true faith. Not only fermented liquors are prohibited by our law, but music, the smoking of tobacco, and the drinking of coffee, are considered to have a tendency to evil. We rigidly inculcate an adherence to the precepts of the Koran, without tolerating any heretics like the Othmans; and if we permit

a few infidels to live in our dominions, it is only in the character of slaves, who are obliged to uncover the head in our presence; so that you will be permitted to live at Dereia, even should you refuse to adopt our creed; recollecting, however, always to behave with humility and reverence towards every Vaàbi.

Aut. Pray what sort of town is Dereia?

Mah. Dereia lies between two mountains, which contain many springs of delicious water; its territory produces plenty of dates and vines; the meadows feed large herds of cattle, which furnish us with milk, cheese, and meat in abundance; the arable lands supply every other necessary that agriculture can furnish, and afford us the means of rearing much poultry. Dereia is also renowned for the manufacture of habah, or abà, (long black caps) which are worn over all the East, and form a lucrative object of commerce.

Aut. It follows, then, that your country furnishes you with every necessary, not only to support its population at home, but also to enable them to sustain the pressure of foreign war.

Mah. The expense of foreign expeditions is not entirely defrayed from the internal revenue of our dominions; the great treasure which was taken from Mecca, and from the tomb of Elì, at Ellaà, is not yet exhausted; besides which, all our neighbours endeavour to avert hostilities by the payment of regular tributes.

Aut. But much money is quickly consumed by the expenses of war.

Mah. Not according to our manner of carrying on hostilities. Every individnal by our laws is a soldier, and obliged to serve without pay; after remaining with the army for a year, he is permitted to return home, except in critical circumstances; then all the furloughs are refused, and every Vaàbi is compelled to stay with the camp, until fortune becomes more favorable to our arms. Each soldier rides a camel, which is furnished by the state, should he by chance not have one of his own; this animal also carries his ammunition and arms, and sometimes in crossing extensive deserts, two men are mounted on every camel; thus we arrive on the field of battle, with a numerous

infantry, whose limbs have not been fatigued by long marches. Our cavalry you know to be excellent, as our horses are able, from long habit, to bear exercise and hunger without losing their strength and spirit, which renders them of higher estimation than those of other nations. The provisions consist of a skin of water, and another filled with dried dates, fried in butter and united into one mass, called aluha, or àlùa, for each soldier; with the addition of a sack of barley for each horse. The camels feed on the few stunted bushes found in the desert, and upon the stones of the dates; and, in case of necessity, will exist upon a pound weight of water a day; if, however, after sinking wells, none of this element is to be found, the men drink the milk, and in other circumstances, live also on the flesh of these useful animals, the weakest being killed first. The alùa is prepared by the troops in their own houses, if they have the means; if not, their richer brethren ought to furnish them with it, and a wealthy person would be in great danger of being killed on the spot for refusing to per-

form this act of charity. As we fight in the cause of God himself, every one is obliged to exert his utmost force, and a soldier who turns his back on an enemy in battle, is considered a renegado, and put to death. But, to return to your last observation, the public treasury only furnishes those necessaries which private individuals cannot procure, and, in which powder and ball are generally included. Dress costs us little, as in most part of our territories, the summer is very hot, and the spring and winter temperate. Trusting in God, and in these holy words, ' Alaha akbar,' or 'Allaà acber,' (God is great,) which strikes terror into our enemies on the day of battle, we will conquer the whole world.

Aut. Permit me to enquire what road you travelled in coming from Dereia to this place.

Mah. After journeying ten days over a desert, entirely without inhabitants, except a few wandering Arabs, from whom provisions may be obtained, especially yaourt, or jaoùrt. * I at length

* Yaourt is acid milk, prepared so as to resemble fresh cheese, which, when mixed with water, takes the name of iran, or airan.

reached the maritime city of Catife, where I embarked, and arrived at Mascàt, in ten days more, with the assistance of a favorable wind.

Aut. Why did you not come entirely by land, like Matlak?

The answer of the Envoy to this question is omitted here, because we shall be obliged to translate it when describing the situation of the Vaàbi army in 1810.

Aut. Do you believe that the Pascià of Egypt is able to levy and maintain so numerous and efficient a force as common report gives him?

Mah. Toson Pascià, the Vizier's son, has a sufficient force to conquer all the cities and villages situated on the shores of the Red Sea, but we shall always be masters of the desert, from our superior ability of enduring fatigue and privations. When the Othmans grow tired of their fruitless attempt to subdue us, we shall again recover the few towns they have taken from us. Toson Pascià wishing to cross the desert of Dereia, attached a body of pioneers to his van guard, in order that they might prepare a sufficient number of wells to

furnish water for the rest of his army which followed at some distance. We soon received intelligence of his plan, and by a sudden attack with our rapid cavalry, cut to pieces the detached corps, near Tarapanà, before their general heard of the danger. The same success attended us on other occasions, so that the baffled invader was soon obliged to retreat to Mecca. When he had retired, Saout caused all the wells from Dereia to Mecca and Medina, to be filled up with stones, a measure which will ever prevent us from being conquered.

Thus finished my conversation with the Ambassador, of which I have stated all the most interesting particulars.

Judging from what has been just mentioned, as well as from other information, I have no doubt but that an European might reach Dereia, and perhaps be amply repaid for his toil; yet the danger appeared so great, that I resolved to refrain from gratifying my curiosity, by accepting the invitation of Seek Maamèt.

The safest disguise under which a traveller could penetrate into the heart of the Vaàbi

dominions, would be that of a watchmaker. I once knew an Armenian and two Persians, who all carried on this trade, and had resided a considerable length of time at Catife, in Baarèm, the nearest sea-port to Dereia; one of them had even seen that city, and described it as resembling other Arabian towns, in being a confused medley of stone houses and straw huts, boasting, therefore, no external beauty, but, at the same time, abounding in all the necessaries of life. He also mentioned having seen in the vicinity some large stones, with inscriptions in a character with which he was unacquainted, but which are probably either Greek or Latin, as the imitation he drew of them with his finger on the sand, resembled K E A. This Armenian appeared to be a man of curiosity, and declared that he was very desirous at the time, to copy these monuments of antiquity, but that he refrained for fear of exciting the jealousy of the Vaàbi, who considered him merely as a tradesman, and not as a man of letters. He also told me that he did not find clock-making a very profitable business, but was much employed in

repairing and ornamenting sabres and other weapons, which seemed to be the sole delight and pride of that warlike race. A Turk who had served in the army of Maamèt Alì Pascià, and afterwards resided at Mascàt, confirmed the account of the Armenian, as far as related to the inscription on the stones, and asserted the name of the place where they are, to be Tarapanà, near Dereia; it is not improbable, however, that they may allude to different inscriptions.

The Vaàbi boast that their cavalry manage the lance, and their infantry the sword, much better than those of any other nation, and a sentence often in their mouths, is, "Bedù abù sef, Frenghi abù metfa." The Bedoween is master of the sword, and the Frank of the artillery: Abù, the literal meaning of which, is father, being commonly used to express the excellence of an individual in any particular employment, as in the two instances above cited. Among these austere sectaries no title of honor is ever given, except the appellation of Scek, and that is never bestowed on an infi-

del; so that when a Vaàbi prisoner at Saàra, heard me addressed by the name of Scek Mansur, he could not refrain from bursting into a loud fit of laughter. The appellation of Seyd has been entirely abolished, because it was first established by Mahomet, whom they consider an impostor. We may here remark that this title, which was at first considered as a mark of the highest distinction, among the inhabitants of the East, is now so degraded as to be commonly bestowed at Cairo, even upon Christians; while no European, except a renegado, ever obtained in Egypt the title of Scek.

To conclude, among the Vaàbi we see all that courage, activity, and perseverance, which mark a rising nation; all that boldness of design, and energy of execution, which distinguish a new and vigorous government; in a word, all the advantages of despotism, and few of its inconveniencies.

The Bedoween, who still adhere to the Sultan of Mascàt, are the single people of Arabia dare to oppose them, and these, in reality, form

the only national corps in whom that Prince can place any reliance.

If the reader should wish to peruse a more detailed account of the Vaàbi, together with a list of all the tribes at present united with them, I would refer him to a work published by M. de Corancez, late Consul General of France, at Aleppo; but now resident a Smyrna.

CHAP. III.

A Sequel to the History of Seyd Said, who unites his forces to the English squadron acting against the Giovasseom.—Col. Smith re-embarks, and the Muscatians are defeated.—Critical situation of the Sultan.—He fortifies his maritime towns.—Some of them are besieged, and the interior of his dominions devastated.

In the year 1809, the Sultan began making warlike preparations, without giving the least hint what power was the object of his intended hostilities, as had been previously agreed upon between himself and the governor of Bombay. The Giovasseom pirates had long swept the Gulf of Persia of Arabian vessels, and emboldened by constant success, in the year 1808, they had ventured to capture an English merchantman called the Minerva, on her passage

from Bombay to Bassora. This unfortunate ship was taken near the isle of Scek Said, and the greatest part of her crew were massacred, according to the usual custom of the Vaàbi on such occasions; the captain being literally cut to pieces on the quarter deck, while the pilot took refuge in the powder magazine, with a lighted match in his hand, threatening to blow the ship into the air. An Armenian lady, born at Buscier, and married to Mr.Taylor, an English officer, was treated with great respect, and begged the pilot, whose name was La Roche, to abandon his desperate intention, the Giovasseom Scek, at the same time, promising to save his life, upon condition that he should embrace the religion of Abdulvaàb. The unhappy man accepted this degrading proposal, and became a Muselim, as he afterwards related to me himself at Bender Abasi. After this succes, the pirates with a flotilla of 40 sail, attacked a corvette called the Mornington, but the wind being fresh, were repulsed; had a calm prevailed, she would probably have undergone the fate of the Minerva. It now became

necessary to adopt efficient measures, in order once more to secure the freedom of navigation, and in November, 1809, we saw a squadron composed of the Caroline and Chiffonne frigates, the Mornington and Thanet sloops, two brigs, and several transports, anchor in the port of Mascàt. The city was filled with joy: and Seyd Said, trusting in his powerful allies, immediately declared himself an enemy of the Vaàbi, and ordered the envoy of Saout, to leave his dominions. At the same time he levied an additional force, so as to encrease his troops to 6,000 men, and equipped his flotilla with the utmost possible speed.

The English having received a supply of water and vegetables, and hired twenty-four Arabian boats to assist in the debarkation of their troops, gave the Sultan a magnificent entertainment, and then sailed for Ras-el-Keima. Such are the advantages afforded by science and discipline, over untutored valor, that in the short space of forty days, the towns of Ras-el-Keima, Sciàrga, Lenghi, Lìft, and many others, were destroyed and a great portion of their

garrisons slain,while the besiegers only lost one captain, who received a ball in his forehead, during the attack of the first mentioned place, and about fifty men. The piratical flotilla was entirely burnt, while in the mean time, Seyd Said despatched a letter to his friend Sultan Messaghèra, advising him to make peace with the English, and unite the forces of the Giovasseom, with those of the provinces belonging to Mascàt, in order to reduce the exorbitant powers of the Vaàbi. Messaghèra adopted this advice, but his subjects refused to act against their brethren, and Saout immediately deposed his rebellious tributary, and caused him to be sent in chains to Dereia. The unfortunate destiny of his ally, however, did not arrest the enterprize of the Sultan, and I embarked with him on board a large ship, called the Sally, and proceeded to Burca, where the whole armament was to rendezvous ; there it amounted to 5,000 infantry, and 300 cavalry, besides another large ship called the Ghengiaver, and about eighty smaller vessels. We disembarked, and my protector conducted me into that very room of the

castle where the fratricide had been perpetrated, which placed him on the throne. Here dinner was served, and after the meal was over, he thus addressed me, "Mansur, up to the present day I have loaded you with favors, and it is now in your power to shew your gratitude, by assisting me in this war." I answered that I should always be ready to shed my blood for him. Seyd Said immediately gave me the necessary instructions, and the following morning we embarked, the Sultan leading the fleet, while his brother, Seyd Salem, conducted the army along the shore. At Saára we formed a junction with the troops of Seyd Azàn, a relation of Seyd Said, amounting to 1000 infantry and 100 cavalry, together with a few boats, and we then entered the Giovasseom dominions, prepared to put every thing to fire and sword, according to the barbarous maxims of Arabian warfare. I was on board the Sally with the Sultan, and the coast soon presented a spectacle alike apalling to the eyes and ears of all who were not lost to every feeling of humanity. No resistance was at first attempted, yet the shores re-

echoed with the cries of the unhappy wretches, principally women, who fell beneath the sword of the destroyer, while the flames of their huts, built only of straw, attested the ruin and destruction of many a miserable family. When we had reached Cinàs, a town defended by artillery, and situated in a plain, the army was halted, and the fleet anchored near the coast. Seyd Said, considering that an assault would cost him many men, even if successful, determined to advance to Cor-Chiel, a town less strongly fortified, whose fall appeared likely to intimidate the citizens of Cinàs into a surrender. This project was adopted, four guns were disembarked, and a large breach made in the walls, after a fire of only five hours; the Bellúcci and Gedegal then attacked with great intrepidity, forced an entrance into the town, and massacred all who fell in their way. Seven hundred of the inhabitants, however, having fled into a large house, built of stone, defended themselves with the courage of despair, while every other part of the town was a prey to the flames. I prepared a battery to

destroy this last obstacle, when Seyd Said proposed to the Giovasseom to spare their lives, upon their giving up their arms, baggage, and all the dependencies of the place. The terms were accepted, and the garrison retired into the mountains, where uniting with the Beduini, they formed a considerable force, which at the end of three days, was again ready to attack us; and Seyd Said then perceived the error he had committed, in not adopting my advice, and imprisoning these Marauders, which he might have done without contravening the articles of capitulation.

The confusion which prevailed in the army was so great, at the re-appearance of an enemy whom they supposed annihilated, that I became alarmed for the personal safety of the Sultan, and begged him to swim to a small boat provided with guns, manned by Portuguese, which I had prepared and kept ready for any accident; for the Arabs, after gaining a victory, immediately disperse in search of plunder, never considering it possible that the enemy should rally. Our army, however, behaved better than usual,

retiring across the plain in tolerable order, while the flotilla made sail to Mascàt, leaving Cor-Chiel and Cinàs, in the hands of their ancient possessors.

On our arrival in the harbour, we were saluted with a general discharge of artillery, as if we had gained a splendid victory: and thus terminated our first expedition.

The English Squadron arrived at Mascàt, about the same time, with an intention of returning to Bombay, but remained in the roads some days, while negociations were going on with the Sultan, who, burning with a desire to revenge on Cinàs the disgrace he had received, earnestly begged Col. Smith to unite his forces with those of Mascàt, and to destroy this obnoxious town. At this moment a Bedù arrived, and brought news that a powerful Vaàbi army commanded Matlak, had left Dereia, and was advancing with the utmost rapidity to succour the faithful and punish the rebellious allies of Saout. A junction of the Arabians and English, therefore, now became desirable to both, and the united armaments once more advanced against Cinàs

in the month of January, 1810. In this expedition I was on horse back with the land forces, in order to render professional assistance to Seyd Azan of Saàra, who was afflicted with a severe chronic disorder. My companion on the march was named Seyd Maamèt iben Elal, a man of extraordinary courage; our advance to Saàra was marked by no event worth relating, till between Saàra and Cinàs, we observed a considerable number of Giovasseom cavalry, who often skirmished with our detached parties and killed some stragglers, but did not feel sufficient confidence to hazard a general attack. Evening coming on, Seyd Maàmet iben Elal and I, at the head of 50 Bellùcci, were directed to reconnoitre another body of cavalry who were advancing upon our right; we challenged them in Arabic, "men enti?" who are you? they replied, " erigial, Sadik Mal Seyd Azan," " men, friend's of Seyd Azan;" upon which we ordered them to come into our rear. The darkness of the night prevented any more minute inspection into the identity of our pretended allies, and we proceeded forwards without the

least apprehension of a surprise, when suddenly we heard the cry of "Allaã, Allaà," and were instantl attacked by these supposed friends, who in reality were Giovasseom. The confusion which this unexpected circumstance produced may be better imagined than described; nothing but the flashes of pistols and carbines, and the gleams of sabres, were to be seen: Seyd Maamèt iben Elal received a wound from a lance below his left shoulder, and the business soon wore a very uncomfortable appearance. However the true cavalry of Seyd Azan fortunately appeared, and the enemy fled so suddenly that in the morning it was commonly believed we had fought by mistake among ourselves, an event which might easily happen in the confusion of an Arabian army. On reaching the neighbourhood of Cinàs, we found that the English squadron had already arrived, and disembarked their troops, with guns and mortars, sufficient to attack the place. The Sultan's cavalry took post in the vicity, to bring the earliest intelligence of the arrival of the Vaàbi, whose near approach was now rendered certain by information derived from some

people who had travelled from Bremi. The exact purport of their intelligence was that Saout on hearing the fate of Ras-el-Keima, had raised a small army composed of the flower of his subjects, with 1000 camels to enable it to pass the desert with greater rapidity. Upon the receipt of this alarming news every means were used to to induce the garrison of Cinàs, to a speedy surrender, while on the other hand the constant offers of the inhabitants to negociate, were evidently intended only to gain time for Matlak's arrival. Col. Smith, at length resolving to conclude the affair, ordered his artillery to open, which in eight hours effected a practicable breach. At three o'clock, P. M. a tower with a large part of the wall adjoining fell to the ground; screams of distress, mixed with cries of "Allaà Acber," instantly broke forth from the interior of the town, while the allied troops advanced to the assault in two columns, that on the right being composed of English. In order to avoid the possibility of any mistake which might have arisen, from the exact conformity in dress and personal appearance between the

Giovasseom, and the inhabitants of Mascàt, a piece of European sail cloth was given to each of the latter, which they were ordered to wear in their turbans, and which effectually prevented any error. The besieged defended the breach with the greatest courage, till at length Col. Smith, having placed some guns in such a situation as to play upon them with grape, the slaughter became excessive, and they soon began to fly in confusion. The assailants followed them through the streets, putting all they could overtake to the sword; 30 men, and 75 women, however, contrived to escape the massacre, and take refuge in a detached tower, resolving rather to die bravely fighting, than surrender to their pitiless conquerors. But, when they saw the flames which were consuming all that the former capture of the town had left, rapidly advancing to their last asylum, they accepted the conditions offered, and became prisoners of war. It is impossible to state exactly the loss of the Giovasseom in this assault, it probably exceeded 700 men, while that of the assailants amounted only to 15

English, and 50 Arabs. The few male prisoners I understood were sent to Bombay, while the females were landed after an imprisonment of four days on board the English ships; but the fate of these unfortunate women, was even more pitiable than that of those who were massacred in the first fury of the assault, in all probability they were afterwards murdered by their own countrymen, in consequence of the well known Mahometan law, which condemns to death any woman who has been connected with an European. In the mean time Matlak with 2000 of his troops, had directed his course towards Ras-el-Keima, but finding there only a few Giovasseom employed in restoring their ruined capital, and hearing of the imminent danger of Cinàs, he made a rapid march to the right, in hope of arriving in time to save it. The town was already destroyed when we perceived in the horizon immense clouds of dust, the cause of which was speedily divined; and we also perceived that the numbers of the enemy had been greatly encreased by the inhabitants of Bremi and other towns through which

they had passed. Col. Smith immediately drew up the English corps in order of battle near the sea shore on the right, at the same time begging the Sultan to pitch his camp on the left. These manœuvres were executed with celerity and exactness, but a considerable part of the Mascàtian troops, and particularly the cavalry, who had wandered about the country in search of plunder, were placed in a very critical situation. Twenty-five of these men, affrighted by the arrival of the enemy, and pressed by the rapidity of his march, hurried with precipitation towards the camp, but being confused by the imminence of their danger they did not perceive the standard of Seyd Said, and fled towards the left, where they fell in with the English advanced post. The captain who commanded it, not being able precisely to distinguish whether they were friends or enemies, ordered them to turn towards their camp; but, either ignorant of what was meant, or terrified by the close pursuit of the Vaàbi, they still pressed on; the English then supposed them to be part of the hostile army, and the discharge of a battery

loaded with grape, laid the whole 25 dead upon the plain. Matlak who was very near observing the destruction caused by the artillery, determined to retire into a neighbouring date wood, out of the range of this battery, and there wait for a more favorable opportunity of attacking the English. His troops remained in this position three entire days, while the allied army still occupied their post near the sea-shore. At length Col. Smith, finding that the campaign was likely to be drawn into a great length, informed the Sultan that his instructions directed him to destroy the maritime towns belonging to the Giovasseom, but not to pursue them into the desert, where his want of cavalry would prevent him from acting with any chance of success, and that he was therefore determined to re-embark his troops, and return to Bombay. Unable to effect any thing alone, Seyd Said, likewise upon the receipt of this message, resolved to sail home. The next morning very early, the English were all on board; the Sultan embarked in the flotilla with part of his Arabs; while the remainder, amounting to about 4000

under the command of Seyd Azan, remained encamped near the sea shore to observe the motions of Matlak. That brave, though ferocious chief, no sooner perceived the departure of the English, than, like a lion thirsting for his prey, he fell upon the affrighted Mascàtians. The battle, or rather massacre, which took place under our eyes, lasted about two hours, at the end of which time, Seyd Said saw his army completely ruined, 2000 being slain on the spot, while the remainder only saved themselves by the agility of their horses and camels. At the beginning of the attack, I had been ordered to approach the shore with two gun boats; the conflict was over before I could fire on the enemy; but numbers of the miserable fugitives threw themselves into the sea, and swam to us; and our boats became at length so overloaded, that we were afraid of being swamped, and were obliged to repulse with our sabres, many wretched beings, who afterwards, before our eyes, perished in the waves. The English were much astonished at the cowardice of their allies, and expressed their opinion of it

to the Sultan, who could urge but little in excuse for the behaviour of his warriors. Both the squadrons remained at anchor the night after the action, and in the morning when we were about to weigh, a horseman appeared on the beach, bearing a piece of white cloth attached to a lance, with which he made signals, requesting a conference.

The English commander immediately sent a boat on shore with his interpreter, to enquire the object of this proceeding. The horseman, who was no other than Matlak in person, expressed his earnest desire to conclude a treaty with the English on the following terms:

1st. That neither the Vaàbi, nor their tributaries, should in future molest any English ship, or subject.

2nd. That the English government should afford no assistance to Seyd Said, in the unjust war he had provoked, by throwing off his allegiance, and refusing to pay the stipulated tribute.

The interpreter returned on board with the proposals, and after some deliberation, Col.

Smith consented to a suspension of arms, and finally declared that he would remain neutral in the event of any further hostilities between the Vaàbi and the Sultan. This line of conduct he did not think treacherous or impolitic, as no express convention had been concluded between Seyd Said and the East India Company, while the late catastrophe had sufficiently proved that little advantage could be derived from his assistance. The provisions and water which Mascàt had furnished to his own armament, he considered amply repaid by the destruction of Ras-el-Keima, Cinàs, and the other strong holds of the formidable Giovasseom.

The degree of good faith and morality, developed in this proceeding, I leave to the consideration of my readers; but as a stroke of policy, it was certainly worthy of praise, as it secured permission for the English flag to float unmolested over the Persian gulf, and extended the renown of the East India Company, through countries where it had been before unknown. The suspension of arms was therefore changed into a treaty of peace, sworn to on both sides

with the utmost solemnity, while the Giovasseom furnished, perhaps, a more stable guarantee in the shape of hostages, chosen among the first families of their tribe. Col. Smith having thus accomplished the object of his expedition, left the Gulf and returned to Bombay.

The English squadron having departed, we made sail to Bender Abasi, took on board a reinforcement of troops, and afterwards proceeded to Saàra, in order to assist the wreck of the army defeated at Cinàs; Seyd Azan commanded it, and was so closely pursued by Matlak, that he was compelled to take refuge in his capital, with a few hundreds of his followers.

The Vaàbi immediately invested Saàra, and on our arrival we found them encamped on the sea-shore; but the destructive fire of our two gun-boats quickly compelled them to remove their station to a distance, after having sustained considerable loss. However, the besiegers revenged their fruitless attempt, by destroying all the cattle they could find in the territory of this unfortunate town, burning all the huts, and cutting down all the trees. Nor

did the work of destruction terminate here; for Matlak, leaving his son, with a small division, to continue the blockade, carried fire and sword, at the head of a larger body of troops, through the greater part of the Mascàtian dominions. Before his departure, he proposed terms for the conclusion of peace, and a conference was held between himself and a Scek of the Sultan, near the walls of Saàra, at which I was present, but which ended ineffectually on account of the enormous sum of money demanded by the Vaàbi. During the whole negociation, I was much surprised at the civility with which Matlak conversed, and at the gentleness of his whole deportment. He recognized me as an European by the floridness of my complexion, and mentioned that he had heard I was Abù Metfà, (father of the cannons), he also related, with great appearance of feeling, that a few days before, a shot had killed several of his men, who were employed in cooking their rice, under the shade of a date tree. This circumstance had happened in the following manner: One day while coasting the shore with my gun-

boats, I could see nobody on the beach, but observed a considerable smoke rising from a grove at some distance; I immediately ordered a Portuguese gunner to direct his fire in that direction, and the accident, so much deplored by the hostile general, was the result of his dexterity. During the progress of the negociation, which lasted three days, I observed that many of the garrison of Saàra were constantly passing to and from the Vaàbi camp, which gave me reason to suspect that some treachery was in agitation, as the doctrines of the new sect had many believers among the troops of Seyd Said; while the long-protracted conference appeared likely to afford means of discovering the number and disposition of the forces which his recent disaster had left him. The second day, therefore, that the white flag was hoisted, I stationed myself at the gate, and interrogated each of our men as they passed through, about the motives of their behaviour. A considerable degree of perplexity marked their replies, which increased my suspicions; and at length observing one fellow labouring under the weight

of a large bundle, I seized him and insisted upon knowing what it contained. His only reply was a successful effort to extricate himself from my grasp, while I followed him at full speed, pistol in hand, threatening to fire if he did not shew the contents of his burden. This measure was successful: the bag when opened, was full of gunpowder, and I immediately carried the traitor, with the proof of his guilt, before the Sultan. Seyd Said interrogated him, but the only answers he could obtain, were supplications for mercy, in the name of Mahomet; yet notwithstanding the unimpeachable evidence of his crime, and the manifest propriety of making an example of such glaring treachery, all the punishment he received, was a blow with a stick, and the disgraceful appellation of "Kiafer!" Traitor! And here, in order to afford the reader a clear idea of the Vaàbi tactics, it may be worth while to give a short sketch of the movements of their army after the rupture of the negociations above related. As soon as Matlak had advanced to Bremi with his army, which, by the arrival of strong reinforcements,

was increased to 8000, it was divided into three columns, one commanded by the general in person, and the other two by his son, and by Seyd Maamèt ìben Nasser, the former associate, but now bitter enemy of the Sultan. One of these divisions marched along the shore, the second directed its course into the interior, while Matlak himself took the middle road, and overlooked the movements of the whole. Seyd Maamèt ìben Nasser laid waste the province of Ismael, and thence advanced to Lecchie, and the mountains of Iben-ruai, while Matlak and his son occupied the remaining dominions of the Sultan, together with the immediate territory of Burca, and Mascàt. In the mean time, Seyd Said had retired with the squadron to his capital, after having fortified Scek, Matrà, and Burca. At the last named place, I had an interview with this unfortunate prince, whose situation was indeed deplorable; and he asked my advice with much earnestness, upon the measures best calculated to extricate him from ruin. I took the liberty to suggest some steps which, though not quite consonant to the political mora-

lity of Europe, except as taught by Machiavelli, would have been rejected by very few oriental despots on that account. Seyd Said instantly observed that they were contrary to the precepts of the Koran, and the law of God. In order to try how far his acute feeling of moral obligation would carry him, I replied, that when the immediate interest of kings and nations was concerned, it was sometimes necessary to put the divine commands on one side, and the absolute necessity of the case on the other. I had scarcely finished the sentence, when, frightened at opinions so detestible, he exclaimed with energy, that he would sooner lose both kingdom and life, than thus break through the commands of God, and the dictates of his conscience. I might perhaps have suggested, that no crime more grossly violated the laws of the creator than fratricide; but this would have been pushing the dicussion to a dangerous point, and I therefore let it drop, telling him that his own heart would be his best monitor, while it continued to be animated by such noble sentiments. M. Dallons, a French merchant who had been

sent on a mission to Mascàt, by General De Caen, governor of the Isle of France, was present at several of our conversations, and advised the Sultan to conclude a Peace with the Vaàbi, and to embrace their religious opinions. Seyd Said however always rejected this proposal, and relied upon the assistance which the English East India Company were bound to yield him, both by policy and good faith. I was at last completely disgusted by seeing the confidence he placed in a power which had so entirely deserted him; and I one day took the liberty of mentioning that the entire difference between himself and the English, both in religion and customs, was so complete a bar to a lasting union, that he might derive more assistance from an alliance with the grand Signior, or the King of Persia, than with them. The Prince observed that a treaty with the governor of Bombay, would render him more respectable in the eyes of the whole English nation; I replied that when two nations, the one powerful, the other weak, entered into a lasting alliance, the latter, in the course of time, always became subject to the former; and that

as his dominions were much inferior, in strength, to those of the English, the grand Signior, and the King of Persia, he should attach himself to that people whose religion and customs, most resembled those of his own subjects. I begged him to recollect how his former allies had ridiculed himself and his troops, because the tents of their private soldiers, were better furnished than his own. Here a sense of his unhappy situation seemed to break upon the Sultan, in all its horrors, and after exhaling the agony of his soul in repeated exclamations of "Allaà Acber," a cup of coffee ended our conference. While these deliberations were going on, Matlak had invested Burca so closely, that it was impossible for the inhabitants to penetrate far enough from the walls to procure wood for firing; a sortie was therefore resolved upon, and night was fixed as the time of the attempt, in the hope of surprising the Vaàbi. Seyd Said declined taking the command in person: and here we may observe that active personal courage was by no means his characteristic quality. which arose, as was told me by a Mullàa, from

his firm conviction in the truth of an Arabian proverb, answering to the Latin adage, "Qui gladio ferit gladio perit." The direction of this enterprise was therefore conferred on Seyd Maàmet ìben Elal and myself, and we issued from the gate of Burca exactly at 11 o'Clock, P. M.—with 150 cavalry armed with carbines and pistols; while the cannon of the fortress fired without ball, in order to distract the enemy's attention, and conceal from him the real point of attack. We directed our course through the Vaábi camp, firing at every one we saw, though at full gallop; we then made a turn to the right, but when we reached the northern gate of the town, it was with great difficulty that we could persuade our friends to open it; and sometime elapsed before we found ourselves once more in safety within the walls. When the sun arose, the army of Matlak had disappeared, having retreated a distance of twenty miles, although their loss could not have been great; not an individual of our men having even been wounded. The blockade of Burca being thus raised, we retired to Mascàt,

which the hostile army soon approached ; and the Sultan shut himself up within the walls of his palace, to offer up prayers to heaven, which alone seemed able to ward off the impending ruin.

CHAP. IV.

Seyd Said obtains aid from the King of Persia, and gains an advantage over the Vaábi.—Is defeated.—Matlak murdered by the Uabee, or Uebi.—Alliance with the Pascià of Egypt. Success of Seyd Said.—Naval war with the Giovasseom.

About this time, finding that the expectations which had led me to Mascàt were not likely to be realized, and that the Sultan no longer listened to my advice with the same attention as formerly, or treated me with the same regard, I left Arabia, and did not return till 1814. I was not, therefore, present at the events which took place in the interval, but shall relate them according to the best information it was in my power to obtain, after the most diligent inquiry.

In the end of the year 1811, Seyd Salem was despatched by his brother as envoy to the court

of Teheran to obtain a succour of troops, and with the greater hope of success, as the Shah or Scià had been for some time engaged in hostilities against the Vaàbi, on account of the pillage and massacre of several Persian caravans on their pilgrimage to the tomb of Ali at Hella. The Ambassador was courteously received, and after a few weeks, despatched, on his return home, accompanied by a body of Persians under the command of Sadi Khan, a scion of the illustrious house of Kajar or Cagiàr. This auxiliary force was composed of 1500 cavalry, 4 pieces of light artillery worked by Russian deserters, and a considerable number of Zumbelek, a sort of swivels mounted on camels and fired from their backs, and of which each animal carries two. Seyd Salem marched with all possible expedition to Bender Abasi or Gondrum, and thence transported his troops to Burca in the beginning of 1812, on board some vessels which had been sent by the Sultan for that purpose. They were received with the greatest demonstration of joy, and being joined by 4000 Arabs, immediately opened the campaign, and endeavoured to force Matlak

to a general action. That intrepid chief did not decline the combat; it took place at Nakal, a village situated a few miles from the sea, between Mascàt and Burca; and the Vaàbi, after an obstinate action, were defeated with loss, and obliged to retreat into the provinces of Ismael. The allied army, proud of its recent success, soon encreased to the number of 10,000 men; because the Arabs who have seldom much interest in the disputes of their rulers, almost invariably join the strongest side; and this practice is carried to such an extent, that I have known a man, four times in the course of one year, join the Vaàbi, and as often return to the orthodox faith of Mahomet. Matlak was pursued, and obliged, by the inferiority of his forces, to retire to Zecchìe. Here he raised fortifications, in conjunction with his friend Seyd Maamèt ìben Nasser, whose fidelity he could not doubt, and sent pressing instances to the court of Dereia to hasten the march of reinforcements. In the mean time Seyd Said, thinking that the power of his most formidable enemy was crushed for ever, had left his land

forces under the command of Seyd Maamèt iben Elal, and Sadi Khan, and prepared a flotilla to attack the Giovasseom, and burn Ras-el-Keima. This town since the departure of the English had been rebuilt, and already contained a considerable population; its inhabitants had not, however, forgotten their old trade of piracy, but with a few small ships, took every Arabian vessel that did not hoist British colours, under which many sailed, from a conviction of the perfect security it conferred upon them.

At the time that Seyd Salem set out on his Persian embassy, the Sultan had written to the governor of Bombay, and obtained permission to purchase some cannons and mortars; for the Arabs possess all the imitative propensities of monkeys, as I have mentioned before, and having observed the destructive effects of European artillery, at the siege of Cinàs, did not doubt that those warlike implements, in their own hands would be equally irresistible. The guns and mortars were soon bought and conveyed to Mascàt; when Seyd Said, wishing to prove them, summoned a Persian bombadier who

pretended to be perfectly acquainted with their use. The proof was made on board a ship called the Fezalèm; but this pretended engineer, almost as ignorant as his master, lighted the fuze of the shell before he applied his match to the touch-hole; the fire and smoke which were the consequence of this mistake, greatly alarmed the Sultan, who piously implored the help of Maamèt and Fatima. The confusion, however, was great, the mortar was discharged just in time to prevent any accident, as the bomb exploded in the air at a very short distance from the vessel, without injuring any body; owing, as it was supposed by the pious Mascàtians, to the direct interference of the Prophet.

Seyd Said, having armed the flotilla with his lately purchased artillery, and strengthened its crews with the Persian bombadiers, directed his course to Ras-el-Keima, where we will leave him for the present, and return to Matlak, who had no sooner learned the departure of his principal enemy, than he recommenced his accustomed intrigues.

His creatures began by spreading a report that the king of Persia, under colour of succouring Mascàt, really intended to subjugate it. Many believed this idle tale; some, who did not quite credit it, were piqued at a supposition which so greatly, in their own opinion, libelled their courage and patriotism; and disputes immediately arose in the camp, as to whether the Arabs or Persians had merited the prize of valour in the late victory. These dissensions at length reached a dangerous height; the allied chiefs felt the general contagion; disputes and quarrels were incessant, and disgust seized possession of every breast.

> L'acciajô allora la discordia prese,
> E la pietra focaja, e picchiò un poco;
> L'esca poi sotto alla Superbia stese,
> E fù attaccato in un momento il fuoco.

Matlak saw the effects of his policy, and judged that the proper moment for action had arrived; the hostile armies were completely disorganized, and he attacked them near Ismael with his accustomed activity and courage. The resistance was feeble, and the defeat complete, for

in fact their army was utterly destroyed; my un fortunate friend Seyd Maamèt ìben Elal, together with all the Russian deserters was slain, and the artillery taken, while Sadi Khan fled to Burca with only 100 horse.

The Vaàbi general, after this victory, instead of proceeding to the relief of Ras-el-Keima, marched directly to Mascàt, burnt Mutrà one of its suburbs, and took such a position as to intercept all supplies from the surrounding country. Seyd Said had no sooner learnt the defeat of his army and the imminent danger of his capital, than he returned with all possible speed to its assistance, but could only arrive in time to see its dependencies in flames, and to lament the irreparable consequences of his folly and want of energy. At length, however, his mind in some degree, recovered its elasticity; he first sent back Sadi Khan, to Bender Abasi, loaded with reproaches; and then immediately applied himself to strengthen the fortifications of Mascàt, and of the other towns, which still acknowledged him their sovereign; while even within their walls, murmurs were raised against

him, on account of the clouds of calamity which had darkened his reign. In the mean time, Matlak laid waste the interior provinces, and employed on all occasions, both threats and promisses, to compel their unfortunate inhabitants to embrace the Vaàbi religion. The Bedù, complained contim 'lly of these cruel and invidious attempts on the faith to which their ancestors had so long adhered. Matlak despised their murmurs, little reflecting on the danger to which he exposed himself, by irritating that feeling alluded to by the Ambassador of Henry IV. to Elizabeth Queen of England, when he said,

> Vous connoissez le peuple, et savez ce qu'il ose,
> Quand des Cieux outrage's il pretend venger la cause.

The consequence of this presumption, he soon experienced, and added another to the thousand existing proofs of the maxims, that especially in war, no enemy is too insignificant to be despised; and that when we consider ourselves at the height of prosperity, we are often nearest to our ruin: according to the Italian proverb,

Ai voli troppo alti, e repentini
Sogliono i precipizj essez vicini.

Fortune, which had so long assisted Matłak in all his undertakings, at length deserted him. One day when he was returning from Ghilàn, to the province of Ismael, attended by a small escort, he was assailed by the Uabee, or Uebi, a warlike tribe, dwelling in those parts, and slain after a most desperate conflict. These Arabs cut off his head, and carried it, together with his arms, to Mascàt; while the Sultan could scarcely believe, even after the irrefragable testimony before his eyes, the news of his enemy's death; so indelible had been the impression of his courage, and his talents. Thus perished, in November, 1813, that foe whose very name had so long struck the Mascàtians with terror, a victim to the temerity fostered by too constant success. He possessed a handsome person, and a warlike air: united with some traits of gentleness, which insured him at once, the respect and affection of his followers. One may perhaps attribute that semblance of the most intrepid courage which so strongly characterized

him, to the cowardice of his opponents, and may fairly presume that, had he been opposed to the English, the course of his victories would have been interrupted; yet we cannot help admiring the prudence he had displayed at Cinàs, where he remained a considerable time in the presence of Europeans; and shewed that he was well acquainted with their superiority, by refraining from attacking them. In fine, without exaggeration, I may declare him to have been the ablest politician and most skilful general, who has for a considerable space of time appeared in the east.

The command of the forces in this part of Arabia, was immediately conferred on his son by Saout, but this young man possessed neither the courage nor talents of their late leader, and the Vaàbi soon lost all hopes of subjugating the Sultan.

At the same time that the head of Matlak was brought to Mascàt, a small boat arrived from Gedda, in which was Messaghèra the dethroned Sultan of the Giovasseom, who had escaped from Dereia to Mecca; and placed himself under the protection of the Othmans.

The Pascià of Grand Cairo had been for some time engaged in hostilities with the Vaàbi, but had never before bethought himself of concluding an alliancewithSeydSaid.However, after the arrival of Messaghèra, the ancient friend of the Sultan Maamèt Alì Pascià considered that such an instrument might be useful, in making a diversion on the opposite coast of the peninsula, and accordingly sent him to Mascàt, entreating Seyd Said to protect him, and if possible restore him to the possession of Ras-el-Keima. By the same channel he took care to spread the news of the great success which had hitherto attended his efforts, and demanded a succour of ships, boats, and especially provisions, which would be so useful in his future enterprizes. Seyd Said immediately began to entertain hopes of retrieving his ruined affairs, and felt his vanity gratified in the respect shewn him by the powerful Court of Constantinople. He soon after despatched a ship to Gedda, loaded with provisions and ammunition; and at the same time assured Toson, son of Maamèt Alì Pascià, that he might depend on all the assistance that Mascàt could afford,

while his efforts were directed against the common enemy. A Flotilla was also equipped, and the command conferred on Messaghèra; that he might endeavour to recover his ancient territories by force, or by awakening the dormant affection of his former subjects.

Ras-el-Keima was too strong to be attacked with any prospect of success; but on the opposite shore of the Gulf Lenghi, and all the other possessions of the Giovasseom were obliged to submit to their old master, who had increased his forces by the powerful influence of Mascàtian subsidies; so that this warlike tribe are at present divided, one part continuing faithful to the Vaàbi, while the remainder are subject to Messaghèra. The happy Seyd Said, who so lately could hardly protect himself, was now in a condition to give away thrones to others. The Pascià of Gedda informed him from time to time that the cities of Mecca and Medina were reconquered, and that the Vaàbi were driven from the coast of the Red Sea; but when he attempted to penetrate into the interior, his former good fortune

forsook him; the courage and activity of the foe, joined to their capacity of enduring privations, and the impossibility of subsisting an army in long marches across the desert, protected the walls of Dereia from any insults, and after all their misfortunes, the Vaàbi retained complete possession of the whole interior of the Arabian peninsula. Philosophers and Poets have alike observed, that when the wheel of Fortune turns, it usually retraces its revolutions with extreme rapidity: it was so on the present occasion; for while the news of the repeated successes of Toson were constantly arriving at Mascàt, a report reached the town that Saout, commander of the Vaàbi, a man whose courage, activity, and sound policy, had been the principal source of their victories, was no more: he died at Dereia, and was succeeded by Abdàlla Aziz the 2nd. to whom public opinion ascribed talents of a very inferior order. This rapid course of favourable events restored happiness and tranquillity to Seyd Said, who so lately appeared to be on the very verge of destruction: his dominions began also to reap the fruits of

tranquillity; orders were given for rebuilding the towns that had been destroyed, the husbandman returned to the cultivation of those fields he had so long deserted, and the government of the provinces was restored to its former organization. The Bedù arrived at Mascàt in crowds to felicitate their legitimate prince on the happy change in his circumstances, and to assure him of their fidelity; the merchants too once more commenced with eagerness their gainful speculations: Seyd Said in the mean time resolved to increase the strength of his flotilla, and for that purpose ordered a large ship to be built at Bombay.

However Scek Salé, chief of the Giovasseom of Ras-el-Keima, did not lose courage at the untoward aspect of his affairs, but on the contrary determined to prosecute hostilities with all imaginable vigour. A great number of boats belonging to him infeste the neighbouring sea, and miserable was that crew who fell into his hands; for death, attended with wanton insult, and the most horrible tor-

most horrible tortures, was a degree of mercy reserved, but for few. Abdàlla Aziz, wished to signalise the beginning of his reign, and to show that, in losing Saout, the Vaàbi had found another chief who could either lead, or direct their forces to victory. He began his operations by remitting 10,000 dollars for the purpose of equipping a very large dav, (a kind of vessel much resembling a Mediterranean Xebec) and ordered her to cruise in the gulf, and capture all the Arabian merchantmen she could meet. She carried twelve guns, and her crew consisted of 400 choice men. After putting to sea, Giàfer, the Scek who commanded her, directed his course to Mascàt, and appeared near the port, before the affrighted citizens had learned that such a ship existed. It would require the kindling pen of poetic genius, to describe the terror which instantly seized them, at this unexpected apparition.

Scorse nell'ossa ai terrazzani il gelo,
Quando vidder, colui venir dal ceilo.

Pale and trembling, they looked on each other without daring to utter a word, or to suggest measures capable of warding off the impending danger. Yet the Sultan was in his palace, surrounded by a multitude of Bedù, beside his regular troops, and the port was crowded with ships among which that so lately arrived from Bombay, called the Caroline, attracted universal admiration.

To reassure his terrified subjects, the equally terrified Seyd Said, was obliged to put on at least the appearance of intrepidity. He accordingly embarked on board his new vessel, attended by a thousand men, armed with lances, and among whom were a crowd of his own slaves, together with many of his intimate friends and relations; two other three-masted ships were also equipped, and the whole put to sea and approached the dav which was cruising near Mutrà. The Caroline immediately fired, though the enemy was out of the range of her artillery, and, disdaining to reply with a single shot, made sail towards Cape Calajàt. Seyd Said, delighted with what appeared to be a flight on the part of his enemy, and satisfied

with the abundant harvest of glory he had reaped, returned into the harbour amid the joyful exclamations of victory, and ordered the two remaining ships to pursue the foe. His directions were obeyed; the two ships reached the height of Cape Calajàt; there they saw Scek Giàfer capture two richly-laden barks full of Beniani and Arabs, and put every man of the unfortunate crews to the sword, without daring to approach within less than three miles of the spot where this bloody tragedy was perpetrating; they afterwards returned home to carry the news of their courage and success to their master, while the dav put to sea in search of more booty. The reader may suppose I am describing the mimic wars of a pantomine, yet all that I relate is strictly conformable to truth. As Seyd Said could not accuse his officers of cowardice, without a tacit reflection on his own conduct, and yet the murmurs of the people required a sacrifice, he thought it best to attribute their behaviour to treachery, and to punish them by the disgraceful appellation of Kiàfer. However, the merchants were not

quite satisfied; they loudly complained of the hardship of paying taxes for the support of troops who scarcely dared to look an enemy in the face; till, at length, the purity of their faith convinced them that all their misfortunes were guided by that predestination to which every pious Mahometan so submissively bows.

In the mean time Scek Giàfer, having been joined by a small Giovasseom flotilla, directed his course to Kormazo, a town near Kuch, or Kecc, on the coast of Meckran; three ships were immediately despatched from Mascàt, to its relief; but returned as usual, unsuccessful. Let not the reader think that, in thus narrating the errors and disgrace of my former master, I am actuated by any animosity towards him: my principles alike forbid me to conceal, to misrepresent, or to exaggerate the truth; the ensuing part of this work will show the sincere attachment with which I served him, and which was alike inspired by his unvaried kindness to myself, and by the many traits of goodness, which illuminated even his failings.

CHAP. V.

Domestic life of the Arabs.—Observations on their characteristic qualities.—Cursory remarks on them, and other Asiatic nations.—Description of the Beniani, Sabæns and Lotia.

It would be a useless waste of words to repeat here what former authors have said concerning the general manners of the east; where customs, however, from the lapse of time, have undergone any alteration, I shall not fail to notice the change. It may be interesting to the reader to learn something of the private life of the Arabs; and, in order to gratify this curiosity, I have collected the following observations, which, though trivial in themselves, yet may perhaps afford a more distinct idea of the character of this people, than the most

complete and laboured narration of public events.

An Arab rises as soon as it is light, begins his religious exercises by crying La ila illellah! and then extending his hand over the body of any Mahometan person who may happen to repose near him, he rouses him with the exclamation Al Sela! al Sela! (pray to God! pray to God!) Even at sea, the first who awakes always invites his neighbour to prayers in this manner, though he may chance to be completely a stranger; and this custom is never omitted, nor does the person awakened display any sign of unwillingness, unless when the night has been principally passed in labour instead of repose; which is often the case with servants and slaves, who always seem extremely sluggish, unless they are stimulated into action by their masters.

In the city, in the field, or on board ship, the Arabs usually repose in troops; so that a Mullà is generally to be found in each separate assemblage: if by chance, however, no priest should be present, the oldest man, or he who is sup-

posed to possess most theological learning, begins the prayer with a verse from the Koran, El selatu aker, men in num--that is, "Prayer should be preferred to sleep;" the rest all answer him in the same strain, though their gaping sometimes contradicts the assertion. It is to be observed that, in obedience to the Moslem dogma, which teaches that man should never presume to present himself before God, but in a perfect state of mental and corporeal purity, they never address the Creator without having first washed their hands, faces, and feet: and if water cannot be obtained, as during long journeys across the desert, it has been recorded that pious men have used sand in the performance of these ablutions.—The first repast or breakfast is called *el moza*, and consists of biscuits, fried fish, pastry, tea and coffee, among those in good circumstances; while the poor are obliged to be contented with dates and a little boiled rice. About noon a sort of luncheon is served up to the wealthy, called "El Caddè," which consists of meat dressed in a variety of different manners. But the principal meal for

poor as well as rich is called "ascià, or assha," and is eaten about the time of the setting sun; it is composed of a large pillau of rice mixed with pieces of stewed meat, or sometimes fowls: those who cannot afford so expensive a dish, content themselves with rice and fish.

The Arabs are, in general, a very sober race; excessive corpulence is unknown among them: this may perhaps be attributed, in a great degree, to the extreme heat of the climate; yet they are not naturally indolent, though commonly supposed to be so; many of their artificers are as assiduous as those in Europe; and I have seen a man whose employment was boring pearls, and who continued regularly at work for the whole day. Some, indeed, pass their time in a state of listless inaction; but this is owing to the natural insecurity of property incident to every despotic state, which places the produce of industry in jeopardy, and, of course, removes the grand stimulus to activity.

At most seasons of the year, the poor are happy to engage their services, to anybody

who is able to give them employment, but when the season for gathering dates arrives, it is very difficult to procure a servant. That staff of life furnishes every body, with subsistence, at a very low price; and it is not thought a crime of deep die, even to steal a small quantity of what nature produces in so great abundance. At that time of plenty and happiness, those who are not naturally disposed to activity, sit all day under the trees, reciting, in a musical tone, verses out of the Koran; and when sleep overcomes their faculties, they sink to repose under the hospitable boughs, which at once afford both food and shelter. In excuse for this apparent sloth, we must recollect that from many of those amusements which engross so large a portion of the European's time, a half civilized Arab is entirely debarred by his religion, which prohibits, in the most absolute terms *all games of chance*, and, by implication, *theatrical exhibitions*. Would not the goddess Vacuna, have a still larger number of votaries in Paris, and London, were it not for the stimulating de-

lights of the Opera, the Ridotto, the Theatre, or the Faro Table?

Manufactories of fire-arms and fine sabres, though sufficiently common in Turkey and Persia, are absolutely unknown in the wide extent of Arabia; all that are used, either in war, or hunting, must be imported from other countries. At Mascàt, saltpetre is procured in considerable quantities; yet owing to want of skill in its preparations, or to the badness of the charcoal, the gunpowder there is so bad as to be fit for little else than firing salutes; that which is imported by the English or other Europeans being stronger in the proportion of four to one. The pearl oyster gives employment to many of the inhabitants of Oman; the common fishery to a still larger number: the Bedù are constantly attending their herds of camels and other cattle: the few who may be called learned, pass the day in studying the writings of their prophet, or the numerous commentaries which have been composed upon them; some of which are now of almost equal authority with the inspired volume itself; while the

Sultan and his Sceks decide the causes that arise among their vassals, or perform a variety of evolutions on their beautiful horses. During the whole of my service under Seyd Said I never once saw either himself, or his ministers, engaged in calculations about levying a new tax to increase the receipts of the treasury: to motives of interest indeed the Arabs are always alive, especially where money is concerned; but the possibility of gaining it must not depend on remote contingencies, and be followed through all the mazes of fiscal subtlety. The Mascatian women are principally employed in cooking food for their families, and reading the Koran if they are able: the spinning-wheel and the loom are little in use, as the extreme heat renders much clothing unnecessary, and that usually worn can be imported from India cheaper than it can be manufactured. That system of political œconomy which teaches the enlightened rulers of Europe to debar themselves and their subjects from the enjoyment of many comforts and conveniencies, merely because they are pro-

duced in foreign countries, has never travelled into this barbarous portion of the torrid zone.

The Arabian children are sent to school, and taught reading and writing; they also learn the Koran by heart. It is very ridiculous to observe them with their master, as they all have a habit of moving their heads from side to side like so many marmots.

There can be little occasion for servants in a country where the personal wants of any individual are very few; the rich, however, possess black slaves, who beat the coffee-berries, in order to disengage them from the husk, and perform other offices requiring little exertion. It is amusing to hear the sound produced by the pestle and mortar of the negroes, while engaged in this employment; they descend in regular time, and at a distance might be taken for a chime of bells. The household troops of the Sultan and Sceks are principally formed of these foreigners. Banquets are uncommon in Arabia; the retired habits of the Orientals, and the seclusion of their women, conspiring to render the men

fond of the domestic society which their families afford; but I was once present at a grand entertainment given by Seyd Said to which fifty guests were invited: the spot where they met was on the sea-shore, between Sibi and Matrà, where a cannon foundry had been established under the superintendance of a Persian refugee: and the time fixed was when some mortars newly cast were to be proved. The honour of this royal invitation was not entirely free from danger; for one of these clumsy implements burst at the distance of only fifty yards from the place where I was standing, and from which I had just caused the spectators to remove, fearing that the ignorance of this pretended engineer would produce some fatal accident. The fragments of brass flew about me in all directions, and one struck the umbrella jnst above my head, but without causing me any injury; however, the Sultan, who was placed in security behind a wall at a considerable distance, exclaimed, "poor Scek Mansur," and instantly despatched his slaves to congratulate me on the extraordinary escape. But

what was most wonderful, the rascally Persian, in order to shield himself from disgrace, and perhaps punishment, most strenuously persisted that the mischief was wholly to be attributed to me! This little accident, however, did not disturb the festivity of the day. Dinner was laid in a house built of straw, contiguous to the foundry, and the repast began about one o'clock. A long piece of calico was placed upon the ground, and upon this were laid a vast number of dishes of rich Chinese porcelain, containing fifty fowls roasted, many *Dolma*, or messes of meat, each wrapped in a leaf of the beet, which together with cabbage and spinage, is cultivated in almost every garden; plates full of ribs of mutton, &c. In the centre were two large wooden dishes, supporting lambs baked whole, and stuffed with rice; and to all these delicacies was added a great quantity of pillau. After this course was removed, appeared what might be called the desert, consisting of Marabà, or preserved pineapple, orange-peel, ginger, and nutmegs; and the feast terminated with a large quantity of the best oranges, brought for the Sul-

tan's use from Bender Abasi. The only beverage was pure water, and the guests sat cross-legged without any attention to the laws of precedence; they consisted of Arabian Sceks, merchants, the Persian artificer, the relations of Seyd Said, and this monarch who placed himself very near me, and laughed most heartily at the accident which had happened in the morning. It is to be observed that an Arab never drinks during the time he is eating, but merely takes one draught after he has finished. When all was over, everybody repeated *alam-dulillà!* God be thanked; and then each person embarked on board his own boat, and returned to Mascàt; all that remained of the dinner being abandoned to the slaves, the Oria, and other attendants, who did not suffer a morsel of it to be wasted.

Though the Arabs are not a very lively race of men, yet after supper, they often amuse themselves at various games; sometimes twelve cups are inverted, and under one is placed a ring, in discovering which consists the art of the game; or they suffer their eyes to be closed by means of a thick bandage, and endeavour to

guess who it is that strikes them: they have many other diversions of the same kind, which all agree in being very trifling, and proper to please none but children in Europe. The Mascatians retire early to rest; for, excepting when on a journey, or at sea, they lie down before 10 o'clock, and before midnight their first sleep is usually over. The poor repose upon the bare ground, those in better circumstances upon straw mats, or upon couches, woven with straw, and supported upon four legs, like an European bed; the richest merchants and Sceks alone possess these couches interwoven with cotton, and covered with a Persian carpet. They never sleep upon mattrasses or sheets, but lie down in the clothes they have used during the day, and which even the chiefs do not change more than once or twice a week.

Five times during the day, at stated hours, each pious Moslem offers his prayers to the Lord and Father of all, and these seasons of devotion are observed with the greatest punctuality; the third, called " El Kiendi," is the most holy, and is fixed about three hours before

the setting of the sun, when the shade of the head falls three yards from the feet. At that moment every Mascàtian turns to the west, that is towards Mecca; and if circumstances demand his presence in foreign countries, he never embarks without endeavouring to learn the exact direction of his course, in order that he may always know the relative situation of the sacred city; but as geographical knowledge is at a rather low ebb in this part of the world, I was often much amused at sea to hear the learned disputes which arose about this knotty point, and on which it would have been the height of presumption for a Ghiaur or Giaur to intermeddle.

The agitating pleasures and energetic labors of Europe are alike unknown amid the insipid tranquillity of Oriental indolence. An Arab has no occasion to lose time in shaving, in brushing his coat, or polishing his boots: from the incessant activity which vanity and the love of applause demand from their votaries, in more civilized countries, the fashions of his own country completely relieve him. Even the agriculturist in this vast peninsula is free from

that life of severe and unremitted toil, to which so large a portion of the population of Europe is always condemned; for the date-tree, the staff of life in this climate, yields its nutritious and abundant produce almost spontaneously; and as for corn, so little of it is grown, that the greater number of the people have probably never eaten an hundred pounds of it during the whole course of their lives; but it is to be remembered that this observation does not apply to Bagdad and its territory. In some towns of the peninsula the women weave a few shawls; but this is a degree of industry rarely to be observed: the management of their families, cleaning the few articles of furniture which are to be found in their ill-provided apartments, together with the colouring their hands and eye-brows with the juice of the kenna, the numerous ablutions required by their religion, and a desire of rendering themselves agreeable to their husbands, occupy the greatest portion of their time. Only one part of the city of Mascàt displays that appearance of life and animation, which is so strong a feature of com-

mercial cities in Europe: this is the square near the custom-house which is constantly crowded with merchants, clerks, brokers, and pilots.

If an Arab should chance to possess any taste for music, he amuses himself all the day in beating a little drum, or playing on a guitar with only two strings, or blowing a bag-pipe. The extreme simplicity of these instruments is the more extraordinary because harmonic sound appears to affect the organs of these people most powerfully: they are fond of singing; and even prayers are delivered in a sort of recitative.

Though the law of Mahomet affords the same free scope to the gratification of appetite in all countries, yet the Arabs do not take the same advantage of the liberty it gives them, as the Turks; few among them possess more than one, or, at most, two wives, and the Sultan himself never had more than the latter during the whole time I passed in his service. The nuptial festivity is generally graced with a few drums and bag-pipes, whose sounds are any thing but in harmony: the bride boasts not the gold and pearls which are worn by those of Persia and

Anatolia; and a frugal supper concludes the entertainment. Funerals are equally simple: the corpse, after being washed, is wrapped in white linen and carried to a cemetary at some distance from the city, accompanied by a few friends, who afterwards partake of repast at the house of the nearest relative of the deceased, while the mournful cries and lamentations of the women, who are separate from the men, attest the bitterness of their grief, for the loss they have sustained.

In a state of society where the relations between individuals are much less complicated than in Europe; where the code of laws is contained in a single book, and where the distribution of justice is always summary, it is not to be supposed that civil litigation or criminal prosecutions are very frequent; an advocate or solicitor would indeed starve at Mascàt; the prisons are generally all but empty. In a whole year, I saw but one man condemned to death, and he was an Indian Rashboot, or Rascebùt, whose offence having been a very extraordinary one, may perhaps merit relation. He had

claimed a debt of five hundred dollars from a rich Banian who farmed the customs of the port: this man, whose character for integrity did not stand very high, for he was accused, by public report, of having defrauded the labourers employed by the Sultan of their wages, and also of keeping back three months pay from a poor French pilot, who had served on board the royal flotilla,—disputed the claim, on various pretences; until at length the Rascebùt threatened him with violence, unless in the space of twenty-four hours, he should liquidate the demand. The Beniàni immediately applied to Seyd Said, and obtained the assistance of a soldier for his personal protection. On the following day, the Rascebùt came to his house, killed the sentinel with a single blow, entered the door by force, and, with his sabre already reeking with blood, cut off the head of his detested foe. At the end of three days, he was found hid in a mosque and was delivered up to the relations of the murdered Arab, according to the custom of the Bedù in such cases; who tied his hands and feet, and pierced his body in

many places with a sword, before they gave him a coup de grace.

I used sometimes to visit the places of confinement, and never found more than seven prisoners in them, on one occasion only five, two of whom were negro slaves, and the other three Arabians, all punished for disobedience or robbery of their masters. Every body knows that in Mahometan countries, time is reckoned by years divided into exact Lunar months, one of which called Ramazan, is observed as a period of fasting and humiliation; no one during the space of twenty-eight days, eats or drinks between the rising and setting of the sun, and the refreshment which is absolutely necessary to sustain life must be taken during the hour of darkness. The Arabs, inhabiting a country whose temperature is almost intolerable from intense heat, would of course suffer more than any other people from this article of their faith; but I have often observed, that they obey it with the most scrupulous exactness. During my residence at Constantinople the month Ramazan felt in a cool season of the year, viz

about the christian November, consequently the thirst endured by the most zealous Mos lems was not absolutely intolerable; but when it falls in July or August, I should think that an absolute privation of liquid nourishment would almost surpass the efforts of human endurance, even in those comparatively cold countries. The rich might, and do, endeavour to mitigate the tedium of abstinence, by sleeping great part of the day, but what is to become of the poor who can only procure subsistence, by unremitting toil? Their suffering must be dreadful; and here, as in many other instances, the evils of penury are greater than at first sight they appear. However, of all the nations that inhabit the globe, the Arabians, from their physical organization, from habit, and from the influence of their religious opinions, appear best adapted to succeed in undertakings which require the greatest powers of patience; nor will their strict observance of the daily fast during the Ramazan appear so extraordinary, when we consider their course of education, if

I maý so express myself, which lasts during their lives. An Arab is perfectly contented with a few dates, and many old men have scarcely ever tasted any other food: he walks barefooted over a sand heated by the rays of an almost vertical sun, and receives them on his naked head without uttering a single complaint: even in this situation a long days journey does not fatigue him; and when night comes on, the ground is his only bed; although suffering under the attacks of pain and disease, not a syllable of impatience escapes his lips; and when the overwhelming flood of misfortunes overtakes him, he only exclaims Allaà Acber! God God is great.

I never heard an Arab murmur against his prophet, or his creator, and this arises from a sort of inherent spirit of fortitude and resignation; for he no longer looks up to the Koran, with the same implicit faith and fervent zeal as formerly; he no longer is animated by a wish to make proselytes, and would not bestow a dollar on a christian to abandon the religion of

the gospel. If, therefore, the inhabitants of this vast peninsula are considered, and in some respects deserve to be considered, a degraded and slothful race of beings, we must attribute the justice of the charge entirely to the nature of their government and the laws under which they live. The Vaàbi have sufficiently shewn that they might be made under the impulse of an active leader, and with a reward placed before their eyes, worthy of exciting their dormant energies. If these persevering and intrepid sectaries have not extended their doctrine and dominion over all the East; if they have not become as formidable to their neighbours as their ancestors in the first ages of Islamism, we ought to attribute their comparatively trifling success to the general growth of civilization, and to the invention of gunpowder, which, by rendering war more expensive, and more scientific, has given to wealth and discipline so astonishing a superiority over untutored valour. The subjects of Abdalazis are not less enthusiastic, not less persevering, than those of Abubekir, or of Omar, but they have not, like their ances-

tors, to contend against the degenerate vassals of an Heraclius or a Yesdegerd, but against Persians and Turks, nations whose wealth and energy enables them to employ, in a considerable degree, the multiplied resources of European warfare, whose religious prejudices have been awakened by the rapid progress of an heretical sect; and the profanation of cities which they considered the most holy on the globe.

When Matlak attacked the Mascàtian army on the sea shore near Cinàs under the very eyes of their sovereign, the assault was made with a vigour which it is impossible to describe; the firing was soon over, and it was the sabre of the Vaàbi which, in half an hour, exterminated, or dispersed all that opposed them. But the subjects of Seyd Said, compared with the natives of the desert, are an abject, and dastardly race without religious enthusiasm without confidence in themselves, or their leader, who at the head of an army, indeed, little resembles the ntrepid and en terpris ing Matlak. They possess not enough of science and discipline to compensate for their want of zeal and energy; they

have little to gain by victory, and less to lose by defeat. I once observed to a soldier of the Sultan's guard, that he ought rather to desire than to avoid a death in battle, as, according to the promises of the Koran, he who falls in combating against infidels, is secure of happiness in paradise: he answered immediately, "dates are sweet and life is dear." In fact the votaries of Mahomet have lost much of the intensity of their faith; and even the Turkish Dervishes torment themselves more for the sake of money here than to obtain an eternal reward hereafter.

The Arabs generally are no longer that savage race of men which either fled at the sight of an European or treated him with barbarous contumely; he may now traverse their extensive territories in the dress of his native country without danger, a crowd of women and children of the lower class, indeed, may sometimes surround him, whose curious appearance may incite them to examine his countenance and attire, and to express their admiration of his superior attainments, by saluting him

the title of Abù Metfà (father of cannons) for these simple people commonly consider all Franks to be artillery men. Neither the Arabian, Turkish, or Persian ladies are so shy as they formerly were. Magistrates protect an European unless when he has conducted himself so as to be no longer worthy of esteem. The merchants trust with confidence in his promises, and often repeat that the word of a Frank is as good as ready money, while they know that the English government spends so large a sum in order to send a single dispatch from London to Bagdad. The French expedition to Egypt, the victories of Romanzoff and Suwaroff, the passage of the Dardanelles by the English, and the successes of the army maintained by the East India Company, have secured to Europeans a high degree of admiration among the Moslems of Asia, which is not, however, unmixed with fear.

Far from being interrupted in his researches, the naturalist may now generally reckon upon assistance, stimulated into action by the hopes of reward.

Physicians, Painters, Architects, and Engineers daily receive, in their travels, encreased marks of respect, but the first mentioned class hold the highest place in the esteem of an Oriental. The Arabs are very hospitable; and to eat in company with a Christian is no longer an extraordinary circumstance among them. The Turks are often seen openly drinking wine, eating Pork, and transgressing, in many other particulars, their ritual, and ceremonial law. The Aggelee or Agheli, a description of Arabian soldiers who act as guards to travellers in crossing the desert, or the Rivers Tigris and Euphrates are worthy of the most entire confidence from the chivalrous fidelity with which they perform their engagements. The Turkish couriers, called Tartars, treat the persons confided to their charge like brothers; the Charvadars, or Ciarvadari (Muleteers,) indeed, are great rascals, but even they will behave honestly if the traveller is specially recommended to them by a respectable merchant, either Mahometan or Armenian. It is commonly believed that a knowledge of Arabic

is alone requisite for an European in these countries; from my own experience, however, I would substitute the Turkish; as the Tartars, Ciarvadari and Agheli, are frequently acquainted with that language as well as their own, while the Armenians and Greeks, who are numerous every where, are always able to converse in it. In Persia, also, the Turkish language is much esteemed: most rich Arabian merchants speak it. In Tartary, Aderbijan, Georgia, and Afganiston, it is generally understood; and I have met with Bellucci who used, with perfect propriety, its idiomatic phrases. Even Matlak, with whom I conversed during one of his negociations with the Sultan of Mascàt, was able to express his ideas in this generally diffused dialect.

Finally, the Turkish is spoken by the Mahallem or pilots, and by many of the Magrebi, or Moors, who form a large portion of the sailors belonging to Arabia; and except in the interior of that vast peninsula, a complete acquaintance with the language of Constantinople, will carry a traveller with convenience through every part

of the East. The dialect of the Turkmans and of Aderbijan, differ a little from that of Romania, but not sufficiently to render conversation between the people of those distant provinces at all embarassing: as an instance of the few corruptions which time and separation necessarily introduce, the inhabitants of the first mentioned countries usually say *ben biliptur*, instead of *ben bilmiscium*, I have understood.

When the Tartars are proceeding from Bagdad to Constantinople, they generally convey letters from the inhabitants without ever demanding any remuneration; and in this they are imitated by the Chappars or Ciappàr, (messengers) employed by the King of Persia, who are persuaded that their kindness in this respect will procure from God a blessing on their travels. The Sài, or Arabic couriers, however, are not so disinterested; but require to be paid by the weight of the sheet, like the post in Europe; and in this they have been instructed by the Europeans living in Aleppo, who derive considerable emoluments from this kind of traffic.

The lower class of people among the Maho-

metans are divided into four principal sects:- Sunnee or Sunnì, Shafee or Sciafì, Caraajee or Caragì, Melakee or Melachì, who formerly hated each other with all the virulence of religious bigotry; but opinions at present are much altered, and I have often seen them in the same mosque offering up their prayers together to the common father of all created things. The individuals of each sect still occasionally, like zealots in other parts of the world, abuse those who differ from them, but every person is considered a moslem, and deserving of eternal happiness, who will pronounce the famous formula, 'There is but one God, and Mahomet is his prophet.' The Vaàbi alone are cursed as unbelieving heretics, for the contempt which they cast on the author of the Koran. The differences of belief principally relate to fabulous accounts of the civil war between Ali and Omar and the subsequent persecution of the Fatimati family; but in most parts of the East these disputes are considered with comparative indifference. At Constantinople, howver, a Shafi who should arrogantly profess his

heretical opinions would certainly incur much personal danger, while at Bagdad I have seen one of them even beat a Sunnì in the open street.

With regard to the essential article of marriage, the laws are greatly at variance in different parts of the East. In Persia a man may marry and divorce his wife within twenty-four hours, merely by procuring a particular instrument from a Mullà: in Arabia the matrimonial tie is not so easily broken: while in Turkey, again, the men generally avail themselves of the tacit permission of their law to change their wives as often as interest or inclination prompt them. However, in all these countries, but especially in Arabia, I have known many men live happily with the same woman for many years, and not dismiss her even when they espoused another wife. In all parts where the religion of Mahomet prevails, the ladies are slaves, and are sold in the same way as cattle. It once happened that an Arab who owed me some money, begged me to delay pressing for payment of the debt, until he could procure a favourable match for his daughter, who was extremely beautiful;

he had been already offered 1000 Piastres, which he considered too low a price; and was determined not to dispose of her under 1500. An Othman Tartar told me that he had a wife in every city on the road he usually travelled. Although the Orientals thus treat their women as if they were an inferior order, and not their equals in rank, yet in public they invariably behave to them with the utmost respect.

Asiatic despotism takes little interest in that department of police, which is so troublesome to travellers in many parts of Europe. People of all nations and all religions, may arrive and depart without molestation. In the inspection of passengers, the custom-house officers of Asia might learn much incivility from those of Europe. When Mr. Somaripa, secretary of the French Consulate, arrived at Bagdad, the Casnadàr, or treasurer of the Pascià, sent his officers to his residence to examine the trunks; they merely, however, opened and closed them, without even looking inside.

The Mekiemè (a place where causes are decided) in Bagdad, differs little from some of the

judicial courts in Europe, in pliability of money, as will appear from the following anecdote: Cogià Davut, an Armenian of Ispahan, used to make a trade of prosecuting people unjustly, and the judge never failed to make his market of these unfortunate persons, who always found it wisest to sacrifice some part of their property in order to save the rest; and when this wretch was obliged to leave Bagdad on affairs relating to his commerce, the Cadi could do nothing less than send him some presents, which again produced a fresh harvest of litigation. If the cause is at all intricate, it is brought by appeal before the Pascià, who, like another Alexander, usually cuts the knot, instead of untying it.

The foreigners on the shores of the Persian gulph are generally Sabæans, Lotia, and Beniani: the first of these people are Christians of St. John the Baptist, who occasionally pass for Moslems, because they can repeat a few prayers from the Koran: the second are a wandering tribe, something resembling the gipsies of Europe, who are found in great multitudes about Matrà: the Beniani are numerous every where,

but particularly at Mascàt, where the Sultan has granted them many privileges, and where their good conduct and wealth bring them universal esteem and respect. In this distant country they retain a zealous adherence to the worship of Brama; and the environs of Mascàt are full of cows pampered with food, which the natives of Hindostan are at the expense of maintaining, because they declare that, after one of his incarnations, their divinity ascended to heaven upon this animal. They all, like the Jansenists, have a great veneration for other animals, and never on any account eat either flesh or fish. It would be considered a heinous affront to kill even a fly in their presence: and the Arabian fishermen sometimes bring them live fish in order to obtain money, upon the promise of again throwing them into the sea; a circumstance which makes these careful merchants peculiarly anxious to avoid meetings which demand the exercise of so expensive a dogma of their creed. One of these people was a fellow-passenger with me in a voyage across the Persian gulph; and I observed that, before

meals, he always threw some bread into the sea, in order, as he said, to please the divinity by giving food to some of his creatures.

Although the Beniani live entirely upon vegetables, rice, milk, and butter, yet they are generally fat, and possess strong constitutions, while the leprosy, so common among other classes in the East, is rarely to be met with among them. It is a remarkable circumstance, that assa-fœtida composes the seasoning of the greatest part of their ragouts. When the conscience of a Benian accuses him of the commission of a crime, he offers barley or some other eatable to his cow, and the same ceremony is observed when he is particularly anxious about the success of an undertaking; in the first case this gift is considered an act of atonement to the creator; in the last a propitiatory sacrifice. The industry of the Beniani, places all money transactions in their hands; they are the great Bankers of Arabia, and so far resemble the Jews in Turkey.

There is no example of a Benian lady having any connection with a Christian or Moslem,

nor do the men ever marry Arabian women, partly in consequence of religious prejudices, and partly to preserve the purity of their race. It is a well-known Asiatic custom for their females to stain their hands and eye brows, but I have seen some at Mascàt who had coloured all their skin, with a tint somewhat resembling that of a yellow. Foreigners would on no account form an union with these women, as ruin, and perhaps death, would be the inevitable consequence of their imprudence. It is a fact, extraordinary as it may appear, which has fallen under my own observation, that Europeans are subject to a gradual decay of the vital powers with such a connection. With temperance, however, the country is not unhealthy; for during the whole of my residence in Asia, I enjoyed good health, except during one slight attack of fever. However, it is commonly believed that Mascàt is an unhealthy place, on account of the death of two English Residents, and three Frenchmen within the space of one Year, (1809.) But there was a common report that Monsieur Piran was poisoned by the Arabs.

Black slaves are constantly to be purchased in the Bazaar, or Markets, of Mascàt, and the Sultan permitted me to buy a female African named Turungia, which means orange; one of my Arabian servants was able to converse with her and informed me that she was a native of Gondor in Abyssinia, that she had been transported by land to Barbara and thence to Mocca. My interpreter taught me a few words of her language; and I discovered that an European was called Zungo, Zungo, though the precise meaning of the words I could never discover. Nini Jàppa signified, What do you call this thing? and, by the help of this formula of interrogation, I learned from the poor girl a great many words which it would be useless to insert in this place; however I will mention that *cunenda* means to go—to come—to depart—to climb—to run; &c. &c. *cupì* expresses to break—to fall—to do evil to a person; from these evidences it would appear that the language is very barren, and that a knowledge of 200 words would be sufficient to make the traveller understood very tolerably.

When one of the Sultan's negroes meets a female of his own class, he salutes her with the title of "*jambo*," which signifies love, the answer is "*iambo sana?*" are you well my friend? the man replies, "*sana sana*," well, well.

Poor Turungia was always dreadfully afraid that I should eat her; so that at last, in order to calm her apprehensions, I gave her away to an Arab. Some persons, who are not aware of the spirit of toleration which has been gradually encreasing among the inhabitants of these countries, may be surprised that the Sultan should have permitted me to purchase a Mahometan slave; but the prejudices against Christians have so much abated, that at present, the intercourse of an European with a native Courtizan would be considered a matter of no consequence at Mascàt, while in Turkey it might bring the offenders into great personal danger.

At Mascàt, as in other half-civilized countries, a firm belief in the power of magic is very general. The Arabian sorcerers pretend to have the power of changing a man into a goat; and this act of diabolic authority is supposed to be

so frequently exercised, that the purchaser of a goat always takes particular notice of certain marks by which it is thought that the animals who have undergone this transformation may certainly be recognized.

A servant of mine once assured me that a goat had begged his master not to kill him, in very good Arabic, and the same man was dreadfully affrighted at seeing me one day beating a pretended magician, who declared that he wa alone hindered from venting his indignation against me, from a fear of displeasing my protector the Sultan; at length I laid hold of his beard, and dragged him before a Mulla, to convict him of imposture. The affair reached the ears of Seyd Said, who was at first very angry, and threatened to have me punished; but he took rather a different view of the circumstances, when I represented that the Koran expressly forbade the proceedings of all such deceivers. However, had I not been well aware that the Vaàbi war, which was then raging, rendered me almost necessary to the Sultan, the exploit might have turned out an

unfortunate one for me. My servants for a long time expected every morning to see me rise with a plentiful crop of horns springing from my forehead. It would be useless to enumerate every instance of Arabian superstition, nor indeed would the task be easy, as so much depends, in affairs of this kind, upon the turn of mind in each individual; all, however, attribute a talismanic power to certain words, and also to substances on which they are incribed. Almost every Mahometan wears constantly round his arm a hollow ring of silver if he can afford it, if not, some other metal, in which is enclosed a verse taken from the Koran, written on a piece of paper or parchment; this is supposed to protect the wearer from a great variety of evils, and the enigmatic obscurity of the passage greatly of course encreases its value. Sometimes, instead of quotations from the writings of their prophet, the Turks and Arabs make use of words written by the hand of the most holy Dervish they can find; and it is needless to add that the latter species of Talisman is discovered by experience to be equal-

ly efficacious with the former. The enlightened reader will not fail to recollect that credulity of the same kind was once universal over all Europe, and perhaps even now is to be found among the ignorant of some countries in this civilized portion of the globe:—let him not, then, pass too heavy a censure on the inhabitants of the East; whom circumstances debar from every opportunity of improvement.

Mr. Niebuhr mentions that the Arabs constantly chewed a piece of chesnut in his time; and the same custom has been continued to the present day; the chesnut, together with a small piece of a plant called Ashish, or Ascìsce, and some slack lime, is wrapped in a leaf, called tambul, about the size of a boy's hand, and its effects are supposed to be very favorable to the health.

The arms of the Arabs consist of a long lance and a sabre, the shield is made of the skin of a whale or some other large fish about the thickness of a finger, united to the sword by the girdle, and in form much resembles the plates out of which the Italian peasantry eat their pottage! Their strength is so great as almost to

turn a cannon ball, the fire arms are generally matchlock. But there were not 500 of these clumsy weapons in the 5000 men commanded by Matlak, Seyd Said has lately, indeed, procured pistols from Bombay, and has armed all his cavalry with them, and General Decaen from Mauriting, sent him a present of two pieces of light artillery ; and Governor Duncan some mortars, so that the army, of Mascàt are now equipped in the European fashion. In time of peace the Sultan and the Jemadar of the Bellùcci carry bucklers very richly ornamented ; but in the day of battle these make way, for the more useful though less splendid means of defence above described. The skill with which the people of Arabia, and especially the Vaàbi, manage their horses, is even superior to that of the Mamelukes.

The Turks and Persians and Arabs also are comparatively skilful in the management of artillery, and have learned some European manœvres which are almostuseless, however, except against soldiers of their own stamp, when the Russian columns advance against them at the

charge step, with bayonets fixed, the cannoneers abandon their pieces. One of the best measures of opposing an oriental army, as a Russian General told me, is to attack their camp with guns of the heaviest caliber, and after the noise has sufficiently alarmed them to assault it with infantry. As long as the enemies are at a distance the Mahometans stand firmly, but if they see them advancing to a close engagement, which is little practised among themselves, a general confusion commences, and each man endeavours to save himself. When my familiar intercourse with Seyd Said began, the first request I made to him was to provide me with a good horse, as a means of security when his soldiers abandoned me, nor was he offended at a demand the necessity of which he could not deny.

CHAP. VI.

Observations on the Arabs, and characteristical anecdotes, which illustrate their opinions and manners.—Account of the Author's departure from Mascàt.

If I had been an unbending formalist, and had not endeavoured to make the best of every circumstance that befel me, my residence among the Arabs would have been one black scene of unhappiness and mortification, and I should often have rendered myself miserable without any just reason. For example; these people call by the approbious name of *Kiafar*, (infidel,) whoever does not venerate Mahomet, and observe the precepts of the Koran. I was, of course, considered to be in this predicament; yet, notwithstanding, I received many marks

of kindness and regard. One day an acquaintance who wished to compliment me exclaimed "Mansur! you are a Kiafar, but you are a brave, good, and honest man, notwithstanding!". Some persons would have been very much grieved, at having an appellation applied to them which is often used towards animals, and which conveys a most injurious idea; but, instead of that, I only laughed at the extraordinary terms in which the intended praise was conveyed. Another day, a man called at my house with two sick horses belonging to the Sultan, and desired me to cure them. I, whose office was that of the *royal physician*, felt hurt at seeing myself treated as a *farrier;* and, having dismissed the man and his horses, immediately proceeded to the palace, making a complaint of the insult I had received. Seyd Said said to me "Mansur! do not be angry because I send horses to you: Why do you not obey my commands, and endeavour to cure them?" Observing that this was spoken with a serious air, I replied, in respectful terms, that the profession which I exercised, and in which I had come to

Mascàt, was that of a physician, and not a farrier. The Prince still condescended to reason with me; and observed—" When my soldiers, or even my slaves, labour under an illness, I let any-body prescribe for them; but if an excellent horse is sick, I send him to yourself as the most skilful surgeon, because I could not replace him for less than a thousand crowns; while one of my subjects costs me nothing, and a slave can be bought for twenty-five dollars." To this argument I replied—" The Mascàtians may be worth only twenty-five dollars, or nothing, but the men of whom I speak, and whom consider my equals, are much superior to any beasts of burden." The Prince immediately burst into a fit of laughter, in which he was joined by all around him; and thus finished our dispute.

Some days afterwards I again took occasion to make myself merry at the expense of the Arabs. I had gone to examine the water of some wells with an hydrometer, and was immediately surrounded by a crowd of people, who eagerly enquired what I was about, at which they set up a loud laugh, exclaiming, at the

same time, that the Europeans were certainly mad. I replied, they would not think me mad when they heard that an old Portuguese author had mentioned large treasures having been thrown into that well, where the heaviest water at Mascàt was to be found; that the object of my researches was to discover this secret, and that, should my endeavours meet with success, I should consider myself the lawful heir of what my European countrymen had left behind. The Arabs, hearing the word *treasure*, which has always a magical influence on them, began to exclaim that I had no right to examine the wells, and instantly jumped into the water, one upon another: here I left them wallowing like so many hogs, and returned home, convulsed with laughter.

On another occasion, while walking near the sea-shore, I observed a group of people standing round a large earthen jar, full of gunpowder, which had been given out for distribution from the Sultan's magazines. I told them that an open place, where the Bellùcci were passing

every moment with narghills* in their mouths, was not a proper situation to expose so inflammable a substance. They only laughed at my timidity, which appeared so unusual in a Frank. I therefore passed on, but had hardly advanced fifty paces, when I heard a tremendous explosion, and turning round saw five Arabs, whose flowing garments were involved in flames, and whose piercing cries implored instant assistance. I made signs to them to jump into the sea, which they did, and extinguished the fire; but on examining their situation, I was absolutely petrified with horror, at the dreadful spectacle that presented itself. Their skins were almost entirely consumed, and their colour had changed from brown to a milky white, which disclosed the membrana petuitaria. Two whose breasts had been absolutely penetrated by the fire, died in spite of every effort which was made to save

* A Narghill is a sort of Tobacco-pipe, invented by the Persians, to which a vessel is annexed, which being filled with perfumed water, serves to cool, and at the same time communicates an agreeable odour to the smoke which passes over it.

them: the other three at length recovered, after the continued application of lint dipped in a mixture of olive oil and volatile alkali. After this accident, as may be supposed, the Arabs handled gunpowder with greater circumspection.

The Beduìni from the interior of Homan, suffer their hair to grow long, and to flow loose behind their shoulders, something like what is called in Italy, La chioma di Berenice. I could always recognize the children of the desert from this particularity; and had many opportunities of observing them, from their anxious curiosity to gain sight of an European, whom they were almost inclined to consider a different species of animal to themselves. When they saw, however, that, in every thing but complexion, I resembled their countrymen, they would ask a great many questions relating to Europe, as whether we had mountains or trees, or horses or oxen; in what manner the Europeans would behave to a Beduìni should he pay them a visit. I always answered their interrogatories with perfect civility, and to the last question usually

replied, that we considered all men as brethren, and treated them as such.

The Arabs generally, were constantly tormenting me about the philosopher's stone, being fully persuaded that the Europeans possess the precious secret of transmitting iron and lead into gold. It was in vain I denied the fact, urging that the privateers who were constantly taking money from the Arabian vessels could have no temptation to do so if they possessed an art which would afford them as much money as avarice itself could desire: they were unconvinced by my reasoning, and continued the dupes of a set of rascally Persians, Armenians, and sometimes Europeans, who pretended to be adepts, and reaped a plentiful harvest from the credulity of their disciples. These deceivers having provided themselves with three rods of lead, and as many of gold pretended to change the former by boiling them in a jar containing the grand Elixir; they are then taken out, and the conjuror by dexterous slight of hand, presents the golden rods to the astonished spectators, and seldom fails of selling a consi-

derable quantity of the chemical preparation which has produced such astonishing effects. I had often occasion to ask favors of the Sultan, which he usually granted with mnch courtesy, though I was sometimes at first dissatisfied by the terms he used in replying to my application: instead of saying—Mansur you shall have what you ask, he would say is ci-allaha Mansur; literally, *If God will, Mansur;* which, when translated into Italian, amounts to a denial. Having often heard this expression, I at length enquired of a Mullaha, what was the reason, that the Turks, Persians, and Arabians, so often answered a petitioner in these terms; the priest told me that it signified, "may God grant your request if it pleaseth him," and was used by pious Musselmen, in imitation of their prophet, who, when himself and his army were in danger of perishing from want, and his soldiers were impatiently asking when there would be a distribution of provisions, replied to-morrow. To-morrow arrived, and brought with it no relief. His followers repeated their interrogatory, and for several successive days received the same

answer. At length, tired with their supplication, the pious Mahomet answered to their last petition, is ciallaha buckra, to-morrow if God will; and this humble submission to the decrees of heaven was rewarded by the immediate arrival of a large convoy of provisions. However, his disciples took the liberty of observing to Mahomet that his prognostications for several days had been falsified by the event; to which the prophet, in a gentle tone, replied, my dear children I well knew that food would not be sent you by our God at your first asking, because I only answered to-morrow; but when I added is ciallaha, the convoy immediately appeared, in order to show you, in a way never to be forgotten, to submit all your actions of every kind to the will of heaven. Mahomet probably invented this attempt to efface the impression, which the non-performance of his former promises might have made on the mind of his followers; but the lesson inculcated was certainly one conformable to the most exalted piety. The Arabs are generally charitable, and their minds are disposed to a certain philosophical resignation.

The treatment which Mrs. Taylor received during her captivity at Raz-el-Keima bears witness to their possessing the former of these qualities; and another anecdote which I will now relate, is equally honorable to their character. During the attack on Cinàs a servant of the Sultan was wounded by a lance which passed completely through his body from the vertebræ of his back to that part of the stomach near the right side. The aperture where the spear-head entered was three fingers wide, and where it appeared about one. I was called in to prescribe, by a direct order from Seyd Said, but the prodigious effusion of blood made me suppose that the vena cava, or some considerable artery, had been pierced, and that all efforts to save the patient would be fruitless. However, to evince my wish of complying with the Prince's desire, I applied a plaister to the wound, and at the same time encouraged the sufferer to hope for the best. He felt the kindness of my intention, and pressing my hand, exclaimed with fervency—" My dear friend, take no more care of me, let me die in peace!

Life is not a gift of heaven which a wise man can earnestly wish to be prolonged, when it is to be passed in labouring for a master!" The placid tone in which these words were pronounced, convinced me that this slave (for such he was) considered death as a chimera, proper only to alarm the wicked and the rich—those who would have much to fear, and those who have much to lose in another world. This tranquillity of mind was probably the principal cause of his recovery. I gave him a dose of salts the following day, and applied a poultice to the wound in the stomach, where the inflammation began to appear, which is not wonderful considering that unless this Arab was differently formed from other men, his intestines must have been injured. However, to conclude, the man recovered, greatly to my astonishment; and this event, which was attributed to my skill and attention, much increased my influence with Seyd Said.

While this cure was going forward, I received on board my ship Mr. H. a man of much more power than myself, who took the liberty

of insinuating, in very plain terms to the Arabs, that I was an impostor, and that my medical practice was founded in the grossest ignorance. His efforts were particularly directed to raise a sedition against me among the Bellùcci, in which charitable purpose his knowledge of Persian gave him great facilities: however nobody attended to his tale, nor did his malice produce the slightest injurious consequence. Finding this attempt unsuccessful, Mr. H. told the Sultan that I was a spy of Buonaparte, and had been sent to Mascàt solely to convey intelligence of all his proceedings. Seyd Said, who seldom acted without consideration, assured him, that my death should be the certain consequence of this accusation being substantiated; and took his measures for discovering the truth, without saying a word on the subject until we anchored near Sahara, after separating from the English fleet. Here he disembarked, and four of the Bellùcci guards were immediately despatched to summon me to the royal presence. Suspecting that something extraordinary was in agitation, I at first refused to obey; but what was

my horror and astonishment, when they drew their swords, and threatened instantly to kill me if I did not follow them. I then perceived the danger of my situation, and summoned up all my courage and presence of mind to enable me to parry the accusation of my master: fortunately the wounded Arab, whose case has been related, was by this time able to walk, and I begged him to accompany me in the boat. Having landed, the Bellicci conducted me to the Sultan, who on my first appearance seemed to cast on me an eye of pity, and of satisfaction on the irrefragable witness by my side; and then in a serious tone thus addressed me—"Mansur, Mr. H. told me, while the fleet and army were at Cinàs, that you are not a physician, but a spy of Buonaparte, sent hither to betray your benefactor, and that I ought therefore to put you to death; if you believe me not, ask the Sceks who surround me!" Without any marks of apprehension, I entreated the Prince at least to hear my defence, and to decide as God and his innate sense of justice should inspire; and then endeavoured to rebut the accusation in the following terms—"Whe-

ther or not I am a physician, the cure performed on your servant sufficiently decides; whether or no I am a spy you yourself, O Prince, are the best evidence. What secrets could I discover, when all your actions and intentions are known to every body; when there is no part of your policy which you attempt to conceal? It would be an useless toil to come to Mascàt and draw plans of your fortresses, when they are all exactly described and pourtrayed in the old Portuguese chronicles: as for exciting your subjects to rebellion, consider with what chance of success a Chiàfer could attempt to deceive Moslems. O Prince, you may cast away all apprehension of a sovereign whose power, though great, is so remote as that of the Emperor of France: beware only of your neighbours, and not of a foreigner who has always served you faithfully, and so often exposed his life in your service. I call heaven to witness my innocence: I call God himself to bear testimony to the gross calumnies of my accuser: but, since he has placed me in your power, I am prepared to submit with humble resignation to your sen-

tence, only imploring you further to recollect, that my accuser is much more powerful than I am, and could have slain me himself, had he not wished to make you the instrument of his iniquity; considering that, in every case, the curse of murder falls on the immediate perpetrator, while his end would be equally attained in whatever way my destruction was brought about. But the audacity of this man is at least equal to his malice, for I challenge all the world to shew that, since my arrival at Mascàt, I have ever committed an action unworthy the character of any honest man. You, O Prince, have seen my exertions in your service, and I swear by all that is sacred, that you shall still witness them, in whatever perils you may be placed. If my blood is doomed to be shed, let not the fatal wound be given by that hand which I have so often kissed with sentiments of the truest affection; but rather let me fall in defending the rights and honor of a noble and respected master. I concluded by apologizing for my imperfect knowledge of Arabic, and expressing my hopes that he had, notwithstanding, been able

to collect my meaning. What was my delight in hearing him say to his attendants, as soon as I had finished, Mansur tachi nilia; "Vincenzo speaks well;" this sentence, and the smile that played on his countenance, assured me or the continuance of his favor, and in fact the accusations of my foe were, from this moment, buried in oblivion. I had permission to return on board my ship, and consider what course to pursue towards Mr. H.— whom I had the good fortune to hear of, some months afterwards, at Buschier; and I immediately went in search of him with a brace of loaded pistols, not to revenge his perfidy as it deserved, but to demand that satisfaction which one gentleman has a right to ask from another. He was at Cut, the residence of the English Consul, about a mile distant from the town; thither I proceeded, and, on entering the house, I found Mr. Babington, Captain ———, and Captain Smith, commander of the Mercury sloop of war, in close conversation: seeing the agitation of my countenance, and hearing the purport of my visit, they enquired why I wished to see

Mr. H.—I then declared to them all that had passed between us, and the grounds on which I had resolved to call him to account for his conduct; they all assured me that I acted with perfect propriety, supposing my statements to be correct. Captain——— even invited me on board his ship, and the following morning accompanied me to the house of Mr. H.— who expected the interview, and, on our entering the room, instantly began to apologize for all that had passed, and to assure me that, in all the accusations brought against me at Mascàt, he had been merely the organ of his superior officer, Colonel S.—, whose commands he had been obliged to obey. I considered this in the presence of a third person as sufficient, and immediately saluted my intended antagonist as a friend, who had been unwillingly compelled to injure me. I have related this anecdote at length, partly as a proof of the Sultan's generosity, and partly to exculpate myself from an accusation which, from its publicity, might prove injurious to me; for the accuracy of my relation, I appeal to Mr. Babington, a gentleman

of high character, who was appointed resident at Buschier by Sir I. Malcolm, and was a witness to the transaction.

The charitable disposition of the Arabs extends itself not only to the human race, but sometimes even to animals. On entering a tent, one generally perceives the horses, mares, oxen, and cows, reposing in the most friendly manner by the side of their master and his children, and they are never brutal enough to beat their horses, but render them docile and obedient by an uniform systemof kindness. The attention which is paid to the genealogy of these noble animals is known to every reader; and, as their value is very great, they are well fed, and clothed in blankets to preserve them from the inclemency of the weather. The bit commonly used is very different from ours, and much more powerful, so that the rider is able in an instant to stop when going at full speed: in this manœvre alone, the Arabs seem to be deaf to the voice of humanity, for their horse is sometimes thrown backwards by the violence of the pull, and his mouth is filled with blood. The Persians imitate the inhabitants of

the peninsula in clothing their horses, but as their country is comparatively cold ; and a double or triple quantity of covering is consequently required, they are obliged to lead another horse, beside the one on which they ride ; which is loaded with their baggage and a sufficiency of blankets for both. I have mentioned already that I can speak Arabic so as to make myself understood, but its dialects are so varied in different provinces, that this was sometimes a difficult task. The natives of Egypt, and Mascàt, would scarcely be able to converse together, while the pronunciation of the Bedù is thick and indistinct. Mr. Neihbur has taken much pains in marking the similarity between many words still found in the vermacular idiom, and expressions made use of in the scriptures ; and I have observed that the sound of some terms has been altered during the short interval that has elapsed since he visited this part of the world. For example, he writes Atba', while the Mascàtians of the present day say Atub, the name of a tribe. However, Arabic has certainly not undergone so many changes as the

various European languages, and this will generally be found to be the case, in examining the modes of speech prevalent among half civilized or polished nations, where the influx of new ideas being much more considerable and more rapid in the latter, a greater number of new words, and new arrangements of those already existing, will of course be necessary.

The climate of this vast country is particularly beneficial to those afflicted with the plague, so that if an infected person arrives at Gedda with strong remains of the disease, even with buboes still unhealed, he invariably recovers without suffering any further inconvenience. The temperature is more hot and dry than in most parts of Africa and Southern Asia; the thermometer of Farenheit, at Suez, during the month of December, usually stands at 83, at Jambo 84, at Gedda in the Month of January, 84, at Mocca in the month of March, 84, during the winter at Lahia, or Laìe, I have seen it at 92; how much higher it rises in the summer I know not. Barbarà, on the coast of Abyssinia, has a more humid atmosphere, and its tempera-

ture is often 92. During the months of May, June, and July, I have known the heat at Mascàt to be as much as 100 degrees; but the sea shore being a little refreshed by constant breezes from the ocean, the climate of Bagdad and Bassora, is still more intolerable.

Arabia is infested by innumerable multitudes of locusts, musquitoes, and other insects; while the neighbouring seas abound with jelly-like substances which float upon the waves, and when handled produce a very disagreeable itching. Every vessel which touches in the port is invaded by cockroaches, which find their way into every trunk, and devour the linen, while multitudes of ants almost fill the water-casks. On shore, also, a different species of these insects is very numerous, and so destructive that I found it impossible to preserve my clothes or person from their bold and repeated attacks. I have seen chests made in China of camphor wood, through which these destroyers never attempt to penetrate. The zeuzane are another sort of insect, which have often put me to the pain of martyrdom: they die in great multitudes

when the land wind blows, probably on account of the extreme heat it brings with it; for I have often observed at Mascàt that when the temperature is very high, the zeuzane discontinue their attacks.

During the whole course of my journeys in the East, I never found it necessary to make presents, as I was not a person of sufficient consequence to receive them: but if a traveller should wish to make a gift which is most acceptable to an Arab, a Persian, or a Turk, he will find nothing more suitable to his purpose than a piece of ambergris, on account of the stimulating properties it is supposed to possess. I used always to carry about with me pills composed of the last named drug, mixed with opium, and found a never-failing sale for large quantities of them wherever I went.

The fondness of the Orientals for allegories and fables, is well known to every person at all acquainted with the East. The following story which has never to my knowledge appeared in any European language, was related to me by a Mollah at Mascàt, and may give a general

idea of the compositions which are so often recited to relieve the monotony of a Mahomedan banquet: An Arab, while taking a walk, observed a snake which had fallen into a fire by the side of the road, and was in danger of being burnt to death; he was seized with pity at the sight, and released him from his perilous situation. But no sooner did the reptile cease to feel the flames, than he twisted his folds around the body of his deliverer, and displayed, in a threatening manner, his formidable fangs; the man reproached him with base ingratitude, to which the serpent replied...."It is true that you are my saviour, but you are a man; and, as a serpent, it is my duty to bite you." This reasoning appeared so extraordinary to the man, that he proposed an appeal to the first animal they should meet; to which the snake consented, and they set forward. After having journeyed some time, they met an ox, who having listened to them both with attention, exclaimed to the snake—"Friend, bite that tyrant, directly; he makes us drag a heavy plough all the days of our youth, or raise water

from a well, by means of a machine fastened around our necks, in order to fertilize his gardens, and then confines us in a narrow stall to feed on a little miserable straw; and when our limbs become feeble, from a premature decay, the consequence only of his cruelty, he kills us, and feeds on our flesh." The unfortunate Arab, frightened at this unfavourable decree, hardly knew what to say in his defence: he declared, however, that this ox had been, perhaps, ill-treated, and was actuated by revenge, instead of reason, and, therefore, proposed that they should appeal to a horse, who was feeding in a meadow hard by. They both immediately addressed this quadruped, and found him no less prejudiced against mankind than the ox. He entreated the snake to destroy their common enemy, and asserted that his pretended kindness was only deliberate cruelty, like the treatment which he himself had received during his youth. He related how his master had given him beautiful trappings—had taught him the exercise of the manege—had maintained grooms on purpose to attend him—and had provided every

thing necessary for his use or recreation; but no sooner had old age enfeebled his limbs, than he was stript of all his finery—condemned to hard labour in a mill—and beaten if he did not work beyond his strength. The serpent now thought himself fully justified in attacking his deliverer, and was in the act of darting forward, when the man entreated him to ask the opinion of a fox who was accidentally passing by at the same time, making a sign, that he would give him ten chickens as the price of his deliverance: the snake, ignorant of what was going forward, agreed to the proposal, and reynard, putting on a look of profound wisdom, declared that he could not pass an equitable judgement on the weighty matter in dispute, not having been a spectator of all that had happened. It was therefore resolved, that a fire should be lighted, that the snake should be thrown into it, and the man run to his succour. The serpent, ignorant of the intended deceit, leaped into the flames, and the man immediately snatched up a stick, and killed him with a single blow. The fox now demanded his promised reward, and they

proceeded to a neighbouring village. Here the Arab desired his liberator to hide in a hollow rock, in order to escape any dogs that might be passing by, and there wait until he should return with the ten chickens; but no sooner had he reached the town, than having collected together all the dogs he could find, he proceeded to the hole. The fox hearing the noise, looked out to see what it meant, and immediately perceiving the deception, exclaimed O perfidous wretch, is this a repayment for saving your life? And then turning to the dogs, he said, trust not, my friends, the promises, or obey they councils, of mankind: but, while he was thus striving to awaken their pity, they fell upon him, and devoured him in a moment.

The Arabs have much less ostentation than the Turks, in the article of dress, nor are their houses so richly furnished as in the Othman dominions. During all my travels over the peninsula, I never observed a handsome mosque, and the only two which Mascàt possesses, are small and mean. The city of Bagdad alone, which, though situated in Irah, is peopled by

a race of Arabian descent, possesses many religious edifices of great magnitude and beauty.

The boats * which ply in the harbour of Mascàt, and transport passengers and goods from the shipping to the shore, are each composed of one tree, brought from the coast of Malabar. Some of them are of great size, and resemble different species of the teak, but as my botanical knowledge is very small, this supposition may be incorrect. The boatmen called "uria," are faithful to their employers, even should they be Europeans, but any person who does not pay them well, is sure to be marked as an object of hostility by the whole fraternity. I always recompensed their services sufficiently, and received the reward of this liberality, in the assistance they rendered me the first time I quitted Mascàt, when the Sultan refused me permission to depart. The circumstances attending this transaction were so fertile of extraordinary events, that they deserved to be

* The proper name of these boats is Ori, but at Bassora they are called Belem: so variable is the Arabic language.

related. Having resolved to travel into Persia, I informed the Sultan of my intention; he did not absolutely refuse his permission, but at the same time wishing to retain me in his service, he declared that I should not embark on board any of his own vessels, and his subjects equally objected to take me on board their ships, thinking that such behaviour was acceptable to their master.

A Beniani with whom I was acquainted, was about to sail to Kuch in a Denghi, and a bribe of 50 dollars at length vanquished his scruples; but I feared to embark before the moment of his departure, lest Seyd Said, hearing my intention, should take measures to defeat it. The appointed day arrived; from my window I could see the anchor weighed, and immediately proceeded with the trunks containing my baggage &c. to the sea shore, near Fort Gelali. The Oria, recollecting that I always paid well, instantly offered their services, and I was transported on board the Denghi without the least difficulty, nobody enquir-

ing whether I had received the Sultan's license or not. Thinking their good offices might be useful on some future occasion, I repaid handsomely the attention of these boatmen, and bidding adieu to Mascàt, we set sail, but alas! misfortune still pursued. The wind for the three first days was favorable, but so light that we made comparativelybut little progress, and the three following days we were perfectly becalmed. I had with me a servant called Sibi, a native of a village of the same name, between Burca and Mascàt, and the vessel also contained many Jedegals, who had been levied by the Beniani merchants. We had also two pilots, one Arabian, the other Hindoo, but both of them extremely ignorant in their profession. At the end of the third day's calm, we saw some clouds hanging over Cape Calajàt, and in a few moments heard the waves roar at a few miles distance, as if an infinite number of breakers threatened us in that direction; soon after, a tremendous water-spout was seen advancing towards the ship, a circumstance the more terrible, as there was not a breath of

wind. My Moslem companions immediately began to cry out Allaà, Allaà, while the Jedegals exclaimed as vehemently, Burda, Burda. I endeavored, with as much calmness as was compatible with our dangerous situation, to observe this extraordinary phenomenon ; the wind became violent, a rapid current of waves, considerably raised above the general surface of the sea, at length struck the vessel with as much velocity, as that of the mountain torrents of Italy, in the month of May, when swelled by the melted snows. The head of the stream passed under us, without doing any mischief, but the whirlpools which succeeded it, threatening to swallow us up every instant, and coming on, our danger appeared most imminent. The Jedegal ran with hatchets, to cut down the mast, and tumble it with the sails into the sea ; many voices cried out "the cargo should be thrown over board," and as this seemed the most reasonable step to be taken, and nobody liked to begin for fear of offending the Beniani. I thought it best to set an example, by pushing a sack of dates over the side. The

merchant entreated me to begin with things of less value, and there were bags filled with the tails and scales of fish destined for India, and thence to China, where they are supposed to be used in the composition of that beautiful lacquered ware called Japan: these bags were extremely heavy, and I soon found myself so fatigued, that I was obliged to leave off this laborious employment; at the same time my servant came to inform me that the seams of the prow had opened, and admitted a great deal of water. I now found the folly I had committed, in trusting my life to so frail a vessel, which seemed constructed for no other purpose than to waft its crew to the other world. These Denghi are, in shape, like the Arabian Bagla, but the stern and bows are surrounded with leather, patched like the shoe of an Italian peasant. Instant death now stared me in the face, and I cast myself on a bed, in a state of mental and bodily agony scarcely to be described. The cabin was filled with sailors and Beniani, who uttered most doleful lamentations: their folly and knavery had brought me into this

most dreadful situation, but fatigue had so overpowered me that I had not breath to reproach them. Towards midnight the wind began to abate, and I fell asleep from the effects of exhaustion: on awakening at day break, the sea was almost calm, and the crew were reposing themselves as if they were in harbour. In fact, we had been exposed to the effect of one of those tornadoes, which in tropical seas rise and fall with equal rapidity—in the gulph of Persia, during the month of March, they are particularly common, and their approach is accompanied by a noise resembling distant thunder. I endeavoured to persuade the pilot to take advantage of this favourable change in the state of the weather, and prepare a jury mast that which we fortunately had on board : an hour elapsed before the sailors could be set to work, and with infinite difficulty, a small sail was at length hoisted. The following day we were again exposed to severe squalls, and in the night such torrents of rain fell, that it was almost impossible to prevent the ship from sinking. The compass had been broken during the first me-

ments of confusion arising from the tornado; so that we were entirely ignorant of our situation. On the fifth day, land was at length discovered, which some said was Kuch, and others Mascàt; we steered towards the shore, and on approaching it nearer, recognized it as Cape Iaquis, so powerful had been a setting from the south. Here we cast anchor, but did not venture to land, for fear of some wandering gang of the Bellùcci, so that, after debating for two days what course to pursue, it was at length resolved to return to Mascàt. The sail was again hoisted, and after a voyage of seven days, we saw Cape Calajato, but, just when Fortune seemed once more to smile, three vessels appeared in the offing, which were immediately pronounced to be Giovasseom cruisers. The wind suddenly died away, and the enemy, by means of their rowers, neared us rapidly; every thing was prepared for defence, and I, as Abou Metfa, was requested to take charge of the guns. Our men, however, added to their natural cowardice, were greatly enfeebled by the fatigue they had undergone, and by having lived for the las

three days, on a slender allowance of rice soak-
ed with salt water. At this moment, a land
breeze from the North-west, happily sprang
up, and the pirates being to the South-east,
could not approach the shore, on which we
determined to run the Denghi, in case of ne-
cessity, and at least save our lives. One of the
enemy having come within range, I fired a gun,
the shot of which evidently struck him, as he
immediately bore away, apparently in great
confusion. The noise of the discharge brought
a fisherman's boat to our assistance, and I offer-
ed the crew five zequins to carry me to Mascàt.
My proposal was accepted, I embarked, and
soon found that I had voluntarily incurred a
greater danger than that I had escaped, for we
could not reach our destined port till the
following day, and the fishermen supposing me
to be loaded with treasure, from my having paid
them before hand, would probably make an at-
tempt on my life during the night, and, as they
were five in number, with great chance of success.
However, I endeavoured to hide all appearance
of apprehension, and accompanied by my ser-

vant, took my post near the helm, where we could not be surrounded, and where a brace of pistols, which I had fortunately put into a bag, would afford powerful means of defence; in order also to shew the fishermen that I had no apprehension of their designs, I addressed them by the name of acuani (my brothers), and urged them to row with all imaginable vigor. Evening at length arrived, and my companions proposed that we should land on a small rock, which lay in our course, in order to dress some fish for supper, and take up our quarters for the night. To have opposed their wishes would have displayed an apprehension of their fidelity ; I therefore consented to their proposal, although my heart beat with all the horrors of nervous anxiety when I put my foot on shore. The boat was fastened to the rock, and a fire lighted, while I sat down to reflect on my present situation, and on my prospects for the future. When supper was dressed, the fishermen invited me to partake of it with so much courtesy that my suspicions were gradually laid asleep, and I cold not help rejoicing on our

vicinity to Mascàt, and our providential escape from the Giovasseom. When the meal was ended, each individual prepared himself for repose, and although I had resolved if possible to keep myself awake, yet the fatigue, both of mind and body, which I had undergone, was so severe, that sleep gradually overpowered me, and I was only aroused by Sibi early in the morning, in order to continue our voyage. We again embarked, and reached Mascàt about noon, after rowing for many hours.

I immediately proceeded to the palace, where Seyd Said was greatly amused at the recital of my adventures, and kindly promised me permission to proceed to Buschier, without any farther impediment. This promise he faithfully performed; and for five years after this, I travelled through Persia and Yrak; and in the Year 1814, I returned to Mascàt, when the Sultan despatched me to Suek, a maritime town about 100 miles to the north of Mascàt, on a mission to his uncle Seyd Achmy iben Himàm. This chief received me verygraciously, and took me with him to Rostoc, a place

of the greatest consequence in that part of Oman. The beauty of its situation delighted me, and an exact description of it, which is contained in one of my letters, will shew the reader that it is not without reason, that Rostoc and Suek have obtained the appellation of the gardens of Arabia. In a short time after my return, I finally quitted Mascàt on board an English corvette called the Prince of Wales.

And now, to conclude, it is to be observed, that many of my letters are dated from various towns in Arabia, in which I resided for a considerable time, and contain a personal narrative, as well as an account of the customs and manners of the people in each particular place. In the present work, therefore, all the remarks which are not specially restricted to the Mascàtians, or the subjects of Seyd Said, are to be considered as general, and applicable to the whole of this vast peninsula.

FINIS.

1 Battery
2 Battery
3 Fort Merani
4 Fort Gelali
5 Custom House
6 Place of Trade
7 Old & New House of the Sultan
8 Markets or Bazars
9 Gresa
10 1st Gate } of the City
11 2nd Gate } of the City
12 3rd Gate } of the City
13 Beginning of the long Wall which surrounds Muscatt.

Scale of half a mile

Map of the City of Muscatt and adjacent Country.